MISSION STATEMENT
CORE TO SHORE
STEERING COMMITTEE
October 5, 2006

The Mission of the Steering Committee will be to work together with other Committee members and the community to create a Vision, Plan, and Implementation Strategy that is widely supported throughout Oklahoma City. The Plan is an opportunity for Oklahoma City to develop a public/private partnership to strengthen the City’s vitality, economy, and image from the southern edge of the Downtown Core to the Oklahoma River. To do this, the Committee members will focus on:

- Urban Design and Land Use planning
- Transportation Planning, including The Boulevard
- Economic Development and Redevelopment
- Phasing and Implementation

The Responsibilities of the Steering Committee members will be to:

- attend Steering Committee meetings and serve as spokespersons for stakeholders and organizations interested in the future of this area;
- work collaboratively with other Committee members to guide the Plan’s development;
- garner community support and promote implementation; and,
- provide a liaison function with their interest groups.

The Steering Committee will meet on a regular monthly basis with the City’s technical team and their consultants during this planning effort. Additionally, there may be targeted task forces, workshops, and public meetings where Steering Committee members’ participation will be encouraged.

This Plan represents a rare opportunity to create a vision grounded in pragmatism that can be implemented over the next two decades and sustained for generations to come.

[Signatures]
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Executive Summary** ............................................................................................................................................................................................ 1  
**Introduction** ............................................................................................................................................................................................. 13  
1. **Context** ........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................ 18  
   - Current Conditions ................................................................................................................................................................................................. 13  
2. **Plan Foundations** ........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................ 24  
   - Steering Committee ............................................................................................................................................................................................ 24  
   - Objectives ................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 25  
   - Urban Design Patterns ........................................................................................................................................................................................................ 27  
   - Land use Plan Evolution ........................................................................................................................................................................................................ 29  
3. **The Framework** ........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................ 35  
4. **The Plan Elements** ........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................ 40  
   - The Boulevard and Adjacent Development ........................................................................................................................................................................ 41  
   - The Parks and Public Space ........................................................................................................................................................................................................ 52  
   - Civic Amenities ................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 62  
   - The Neighborhoods .......................................................................................................................................................................................................................... 69  
   - Moving About .................................................................................................................................................................................................................... 80  
5. **Implementation Strategy** ........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................ 89  
   - Sequencing Strategy .......................................................................................................................................................................................................... 89  
   - Redevelopment Strategy ......................................................................................................................................................................................................... 99  
   - Organizational Infrastructure .................................................................................................................................................................................................... 101
executive summary

Over the last several decades, Oklahoma City has revitalized its Downtown through projects such as the Myriad Gardens, Bricktown and its canal, and the emerging Automobile Alley and Midtown Districts. Along the Oklahoma River, one mile south, the City transformed the shoreline with a pedestrian/bicycle trail and greenway system along its shore.

Between Downtown and the river, lies some 575 acres of underutilized land comprised of older industrial and warehouse buildings, a scattering of residences, and vacant land. An aging I-40 viaduct separates the southern edge of Downtown from this area. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) is relocating this portion of the highway approximately one-half mile to the south along the Union Pacific Railroad corridor and depressing it. With this action, redevelopment is inevitable.

The City of Oklahoma City initiated the Core to Shore Project to guide the development of this land, create a vibrant urban neighborhood that connects Downtown to the Oklahoma River and is a welcoming place for the entire community. Mayor Mick Cornett appointed thirty-three community leaders to represent an array of interests and be the Steering Committee to guide the Core to Shore Project. These leaders met for over a year to discuss the mix of land uses, what the parks and neighborhoods should be like, and how to fit in the proposed large civic buildings, so that they combine into a great urban neighborhood for all of Oklahoma City.

This Core to Shore Framework Plan reflects the work of that thirty-three member Steering Committee led by Mayor Mick Cornett and David Lopez. It is the guide to the next round of Oklahoma City’s civic works and private redevelopment to realize the Core to Shore District’s vision.

“Mayor Mick Cornett appointed thirty-three community leaders to represent an array of interests and be the Steering Committee to guide the Core to Shore Plan”

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Core to Shore District will:
- Connect the Oklahoma City Downtown core to the Oklahoma River
- Make the Core to Shore District the new neighborhood for Oklahoma City – a great place to live for a wide range of people
• Return the under-utilized land between Downtown and the Oklahoma River to full economic productivity
• Become the urban fabric that links Oklahoma City’s Downtown, neighborhoods, and communities together at the center of the City
• Create an active and engaging riverfront along the Oklahoma River
• Provide Oklahoma City with a new Boulevard, great central park, and community gathering place on par with other successful American cities

FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

1. Oklahoma City’s Downtown is separated from the Oklahoma River by 575 acres of underutilized land, outdated industrial uses, vacant properties, and a scattering of houses. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation will replace the elevated highway viaduct south of the core with a new section of I-40 one-half mile to the south. This area will then inevitably redevelop.

2. Parks and civic buildings arranged along a pedestrian spine from Downtown to the river will connect the core to the shore. A new retail center with office towers will define the southern edge of Downtown and complement it with new retail, restaurants, and an iconic new Boulevard along the old I-40 right-of-way. A new amphitheater will be on the south shore connected by a pedestrian bridge.

3. Three distinct neighborhoods with approximately 3,000 housing units will provide a range of housing types for over 6,000 people. Future redevelopment of industrial lands east of the north/south railroad completes the Framework and connects the Core to the Shore. This dense urban District will energize the Downtown and be a center for community activity for all of Oklahoma City.

LAND USE PLAN

The land use plan for the Core to Shore District was thoughtfully designed as a whole community, with places for employment, civic activities, recreation, and living, logically arranged within a handsome, sustainable environment. The plan incorporates three new neighborhoods, a commercial retail center, parks, and a new convention center and hotel.

Housing will be diverse in every respect. Three neighborhoods offer varying housing types from single-family homes, to town homes and condominiums, to high-rise living. A school, a
library, parks, a recreation center, an events center, and neighborhood restaurants and retail are conveniently located to support the housing. Tree-canopied streets and pedestrian-oriented buildings complete the character of these neighborhoods.

The combination of the Boulevard, Central Park, the Boulevard’s retail and office space, and a new convention center will form a grand gateway into Downtown. The arrangement of the land uses follow a pedestrian spine beginning at the Myriad Gardens in Downtown and connecting to the Oklahoma River. This north/south axis forges the arrangement of the major elements of the Plan.

"The potential of the Oklahoma River with all of its recent improvements, has just begun to be realized."
Central Park will provide a large gathering place for all of Oklahoma City. It will contain places for festivals, public art, weddings, play, and quiet contemplation. An enhanced Union Station will include community space and become a landmark within the Park. A signature pedestrian bridge over the new I-40 alignment will augment the pedestrian spine, connect the neighborhoods, and be a symbol of the area’s revitalization.

A new convention center and hotel, fronted by condominiums facing Central Park, will create activity and connect the Core to Shore District back to Downtown. A multimodal transit center along the intersection of the north/south railroad alignment and the Boulevard will connect Downtown, Bricktown, the new convention center, and a future redevelopment east of the tracks. Most one-way streets will become two-way to improve access and connectivity throughout the area. Pedestrians and bicyclists will enjoy the active riverfront and the pedestrian spine connecting Downtown to the Oklahoma River along the Harvey Avenue alignment, key new components of the regional trail system.

The plan shows how this area will become a complete community - a vital urban neighborhood improving and strengthening all of Oklahoma City.
THE MARKET
The Core to Shore Project included a market analysis (Core to Shore Market Analysis - available from the Planning Department) that showed that the area is an excellent candidate for successful redevelopment based on the following.

- The currently outdated and underutilized uses, and the buildings’ low value compared to the land value
- The potential return on investment for densely developed property
- The timing of relocating I-40 and removing the viaduct that currently separates Downtown from this area
- The proximity to the Oklahoma River and its development potential
- The ability of the market to absorb the proposed developments over a twenty- to thirty-year build out period
- The distinctiveness of the retail and neighborhood components within Oklahoma City and Downtown markets, and the success of similar efforts in peer cities

Further, the Core to Shore Project will add value to the Downtown and City’s previous public investments including the MAPS Projects (Metropolitan Area Projects) such as the Bricktown canal, the Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library, and the Oklahoma City Museum of Art.

PLAN ELEMENTS
The Boulevard and Adjacent Development
- A new east-west Boulevard that is an iconic gateway into the City with well tree-lined sidewalks and adjacent retail and restaurants
- New commercial development on the north side of the Boulevard with ground floor retail and commercial uses in two towers above

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND A PEDESTRIAN SPINE
- A 40 acre Central Park between the Boulevard and the new I-40
- A 30 acre Promenade Park connecting to the Oklahoma River
- Neighborhood greens and shoreline open space
- A park-lined pedestrian spine adjacent to the Harvey avenue alignment for walking and bicycling from Myriad Gardens to the Oklahoma River

CIVIC AMENITIES
- A new convention center
- A neighborhood school, library, and recreation center
- A community events center
- A multimodal transit center
- A site for a future museum
- A renovated Union Station

"The Core to Shore District will forever change Oklahoma City’s Downtown for the better."
THREE NEIGHBORHOODS

- West Park Neighborhood with condominiums and apartments adjacent to Central Park and Downtown
- Wheeler Park Neighborhood with single family homes north of the Oklahoma River at Wheeler Park and mid rise residential buildings along the shore.
- North Shore Neighborhood between the new I-40 alignment and the Oklahoma River with town homes, residential towers, multi-family units, and a commercial/residential development around Riverlake, a small urban lake north of the Oklahoma River, Promenade Park, the River Towers high-rise residential

STREET NETWORK AND TRANSPORTATION

- A new Boulevard replacing the I-40 viaduct
- Tree-lined, pedestrian-oriented streets throughout the Core to Shore District
- A walking, bicycling, and transit orientation
- A transit connection between Downtown and the District
- A new Riverside Drive on the north shore at Wheeler Park
- A pedestrian spine along the Harvey alignment from Downtown to the river

IMPLEMENTATION

The Core to Shore District will be implemented over the next ten to twenty years in three stages starting with the portions of the West Park Neighborhood, Central Park, and Wheeler Park Neighborhood (2008-2012). The Boulevard construction and its adjacent retail/commercial development will follow (2012-2016), and includes parts of the North Shore neighborhood, Promenade Park, and the Riverfront Towers. Finally, the Project Maturation phase (2016-2020) will focus on the Riverlake development and Parkview portions of the North Shore Neighborhood. Project build-out (2020 – 2030) will complete the neighborhoods’ development based on probable development rates and housing absorption rates.

Financing strategies include a mix of development mechanisms such as Tax Increment Financing, a Public Trust, and a potential development corporation. Public investment in the parks, civic uses, and infrastructure will dramatically change the image of the area and attract a private development response.
Oklahoma City has made enormous strides toward creating a great Downtown. The historic Bricktown District and its canal, Arts District, Oklahoma City Memorial, Ford Center, new and superbly restored hotels, growing residential development, and the emerging Automobile Alley and Midtown Districts, have combined with nationally known features such as Myriad Gardens and the Stage Center, to transform Downtown from a stagnant city center to a vigorous, highly desirable urban district. One mile to the south, Oklahoma City has also transformed the intermittently flowing Oklahoma River into a chain of permanent lakes lined by a model greenway and trail system. In between these two signature features lies a mile-wide swath of land, much of which is underutilized or vacant, sliced apart by an unsightly elevated freeway structure and a largely underused railroad corridor. This large parcel, so full of potential but so devoid of activity and life, is the subject of this document. The Core to Shore Plan is nothing less than a blueprint to convert this strategic but unproductive site into one of America’s greatest new urban neighborhoods, a center of life and community for all of Oklahoma City.

“There is currently very little relationship between Downtown Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma River.”

An undertaking of this scale is by no means unprecedented among great cities. Many of them have had to deal with older industrial districts, large amounts of vacant ground where trains once ran, and residential neighborhoods that have lost their vitality to age and disinvestment. Cities such as Denver, Portland, Omaha, and Vancouver have demonstrated that these once forgotten areas can dramatically change both the image and the experience of city life. These new districts also make economic sense – they create engines that capitalize on past investments and generate new revenues from property and sales taxes.

“Water, particularly in an urban setting, draws people, and a waterfront or river often creates a strong, memorable image for the city.”
The process of creating a new image for these skipped over areas does not happen by accident, but requires careful and visionary planning. Great cities are reinventing themselves by creating vibrant, thoughtfully conceived mixed-use neighborhoods distinguished by parks, waterways, green streets, pedestrian scale, and new destinations. These cities have drawn their citizens back to their traditional hearts, and have seen their once declining downtowns again imbued with the energy and dynamism that characterized their formative years. Oklahoma City’s major community reinvestment programs have taken giant steps toward creating these conditions. Now, the community is taking the bold stride of creating a compelling vision for the Core to Shore district, bridging the development gap between its resurgent Downtown and its recreational waterfront.

“Redevelopment of the Core to Shore area after ODOT removes the I-40 viaduct is inevitable. The City determined that this was the best opportunity to connect the Downtown to the Oklahoma River with sophisticated new neighborhoods, parks, and civic amenities.”

BACKGROUND

The impetus for the Core to Shore Plan was set in motion by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation’s (ODOT) decision to remove the deteriorating I-40 viaduct, a major barrier to redevelopment south of Downtown. ODOT announced plans to relocate this section of highway into a new, depressed roadway along the east-west Union Pacific Railroad corridor, about one-half mile south of the existing road. As part of the agreement with the City of Oklahoma City, ODOT proposed building a city street after demolition of the old elevated structure. This decision set the stage for rethinking the future of the land uses south of the existing viaduct.

The proposed relocation of I-40 raised a great deal of community controversy and many residents and businesses were concerned that this new corridor would further divide their neighborhoods and enterprises from Downtown and the rest of Oklahoma City. To consider these issues, the City commissioned a Land Use and Mitigation Study, completed in 1999 by RDG Planning & Design, TAP architecture, and EDAW. This study viewed the new freeway alignment as an opportunity to unite, rather than divide, the city and conceived a plan to connect Downtown with the riverfront by creating a continuous park and open space system surrounded by vibrant, new urban neighborhoods. The 1999 plan also recommended a new Boulevard along the old I-40 right-of-way, designed to be an iconic city entryway and an incentive for new development, in place of a routine street.

In 2006, with the I-40 relocation project funded and on the road to implementation, Oklahoma City moved forward to advance this community vision by launching the Core to Shore planning process. The overall goal of the effort was to create a vision and realistic, market-based...
plan to connect Downtown to the Oklahoma River, based on making strategic civic investments to stimulate major private redevelopment. Mayor Mick Cornett and David Lopez cochaired the Steering Committee of 35 community leaders who spent over a year developing the Core to Shore vision. This document reflects the work of that Committee and summarizes the Core to Shore recommendations.

The Core to Shore district encompasses roughly 575 acres as shown on map in map. When fully realized, this new urban center will include:

- Three new residential neighborhoods accommodating up to 3,000 households, along with up to 500,000 square feet of new retail, and 2 to 4 million square feet of new office space

- A 40-acre Central Park, a new living space for all of Oklahoma City, along with an additional 30 acres of park land connecting Central Park to the river; a plaza that features Little Flower Church and celebrates the Latino heritage of parts of the district; and two neighborhood squares.

- A new Convention Center, transit center, elementary school, and community events center, as well as a restored Union Station.

- A north shore along the Oklahoma River that enjoys excellent access for the entire community and promotes a variety of waterfront activities.

- Varied, eclectic, and sustainable buildings of timeless design, constructed of enduring materials.

- A public transit circulator connecting Downtown and the Core to Shore District.

This effort will represent over $3 billion, in 2007 dollars, of development during a 20- to 30-year build-out period. Downtown, Bricktown, and nearby close-in neighborhoods will also benefit greatly from this nearby investment and from the vigorous heart that it will create for Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma City has positioned itself well to embark on the Core to Shore Project. Its recent investments in the MAPS (Metropolitan Area Projects) Program have paid off handsomely in new public facilities and places, a reinvigorated Downtown, and a substantial private development response. But Oklahoma City, with its long tradition of civic investment, will not rest on past accomplishments. Rather, it will use the Core to Shore Plan opportunity to continue its emergence as a leading city for the new century.

“**Redevelopment brings the added advantage of renewing the land and cleaning up the environment.**”
Oklahoma City has made significant improvements to its Downtown over the past two decades. This Plan has been built on these efforts and designed to use their inertia to take Downtown to the next level. The context, existing conditions, and market analysis are described in this section.

CONTEXT FOR THE CORE TO SHORE PROJECT

OKLAHOMA CITY TODAY: A COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Oklahoma City is Oklahoma’s capital and largest city with a metropolitan area population of 1.2 million. It covers 622.5 square miles in the geographic center of Oklahoma, making it America’s second largest city in area. Geographically, Oklahoma City sits in the center of the division between Oklahoma’s two largest ecoregions, the broad cultivated areas of the Central Great Plains on the west and the lake and forest environments of the Crosstimbers on the east. Climatically, Oklahoma City enjoys 4 distinct seasons with approximately 250 days of sunshine and 30 inches of rain annually. Annual average high temperature is 72º (ranging from 93º in July to 47º in January), while the average annual low is 48º (ranging from 26º in January to 71º in July). Oklahoma City is the largest urban region in the nation that has achieved attainment with air quality standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency.

GOVERNMENT

Oklahoma City is the Capital of Oklahoma and center of state government employment. The State is also home to 39 Native American tribal governments, several of which are recognized as national leaders in sovereignty issues of governance and economic development.

ECONOMY

Oklahoma is an important producer of natural gas, aircraft and food, ranking second in the nation in natural gas production and fifth in wheat and crude oil production and reserves. Between 2005 and 2006, Oklahoma enjoyed the fastest growing gross domestic product (GDP) in the nation. Oklahoma City’s economy has traditionally oscillated with the fortunes of the oil industry. However, the City now boasts a diversified economy that places oil behind 5 other market sectors.

CULTURE

Today’s Oklahoma is utterly different from the stereotypes of the Dust Bowl era. Oklahoma City’s tapestry of lakes and trails, world class museums and cultural sites, active
urban districts, and superb neighborhoods define the city's character. These features are supported by a tradition of civic philanthropy that ranks near top in the nation in per capita giving.

The University of Oklahoma (OU), the state's largest public university, is located just south of Oklahoma City in Norman. OU is a leading educational and national research institution, although it is perhaps better known for having the most successful major college football program in history. The University of Oklahoma's Medical Center in Oklahoma City makes the City a center for cutting-edge medical research.

Oklahoma City became the wildly successful temporary home for the NBA's New Orleans Hornets basketball team between 2005 and 2007. This two year romance augurs well for a relocation of a National Basketball Association team to the City in the near future.

TRANSPORTATION

Oklahoma City's location at the junction of Interstates 35, 40 and 44 makes it one of the most important nodes in the Interstate system. Will Rogers World Airport counts over 3.5 million passengers yearly. Six major airlines and four regional carriers serve the airport with direct flights to over twenty major destinations and both coasts.

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) and Union Pacific (UP) Railroads operate the City's two major rail networks. Both railroads have increased freight operations dramatically since creation of the NAFTA corridor through the center of Oklahoma. Amtrak's Heartland Flyer provides daily service to Fort Worth via the BNSF.

OKLAHOMA CITY'S ORIGINS

During the 1800's, the United States government forcibly relocated many Native American tribes across the country into Indian Territory, a part of what is now Oklahoma (derived from Choctaw for "red people"). One area in the center of this territory, known as the "Unassigned Lands," remained unallocated to any tribe. Between 1866 and 1889, more than three million longhorn cattle were driven to northern markets through the Unassigned Lands along the famous Chisholm Trail. Following the Civil War, railroads received right-of-way grants through this territory, and these lines depended on water wells and coal stations in the Unassigned Lands. The Santa Fe Railroad established one such water well in 1887 on the north bank of what is now called the Oklahoma River, near the Chisholm Trail. This site, the original settlement of Oklahoma City, was originally named Oklahoma Station.

In 1889 President Benjamin Harrison signed legislation to settle the Unassigned Lands, now called the Oklahoma Territory. The "Land Run" held on April 22, 1889 saw tens of thousands of settlers awaiting the noon signal to cross the line and stake their claim. Many of these prospective
settlers took the train to Oklahoma Station. In 1907, Indian Territory joined with Oklahoma Territory to become the new State of Oklahoma. In elections held in 1910, voters determined that Oklahoma City would be the capital of the new state, establishing the former railroad watering stop as Oklahoma’s center of commerce and government.

The Chisholm Trail and the Santa Fe (now BNSF) Railroad’s Oklahoma Station became the most important destinations in the “Run” of 1889. Now, a century after Statehood, these historic events and places are at the heart of the Core to Shore Plan. The Plan’s vision begins with this deeply rooted sense of history.

DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT IN THE BEGINNING

The railroad was a powerful determinant of the location, growth and type of business in various parts of the City. The Santa Fe transported brick used to construct the large warehouse buildings east of the tracks, creating the area now known as Bricktown. The heart of city retail, business, entertainment, and commerce grew on the opposite side of the tracks, away from this warehousing and industrial district. Today, these patterns remain evident, but Bricktown’s role in the city has changed dramatically from its industrial origins to a lively entertainment district.
By 1902, the abundance of railroads established Oklahoma City as a key transportation crossroads west of the Mississippi. The transportation industry and golden years in the agricultural economy from 1898 to 1918 propelled the young city forward. Cotton became the principal cash crop, equaling cattle and oil as a pillar of the economy, and Oklahoma City experienced unprecedented economic and construction growth during the 1920s.

“In elections held in 1910, voters determined that Oklahoma City would be the capital of the new state…”

THE PWA

However, the greatest growth was yet to come. Oklahoma City’s most spectacular period of economic boom began with the first “gusher” of oil in November, 1928. Construction in Oklahoma City reached a pinnacle during the next three years and oil wealth somewhat minimized the effects of the Great Depression on the local economy. In 1933, President Roosevelt’s “New Deal” Public Works Administration sparked an ambitious program of public projects in 1937, including the County Courthouse, Municipal Building (City Hall), Municipal Auditorium (now Civic Center Music Hall) and a Police Headquarters. These buildings were located on a strip of land vacated by an east-west railroad and purchased for $4 million ($50 million in 2007 dollars), with citizen approval of a bond issue.

URBAN RENEWAL AND CITY DEVELOPMENT

In the late 1760’s the architect I.M. Pei developed a master plan for Downtown redevelopment that guided a number of major decisions and development projects. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority led efforts to implement this plan and revitalize many areas of the center city through such project as

- Mummers Theater (now Stage Center) in 1970
- Myriad Convention Center in 1972
- Myriad Gardens in 1977
- Crystal Bridge in 1988

In the mid 1970s, the Urban Renewal Authority proposed additional new development for the downtown business district, requiring the removal of a number of historic buildings such as the Baum Building (at Robinson and Sheridan) and the Biltmore Hotel (at the northeast section of the Myriad Gardens).

THE MAPS INITIATIVES

Maps

While Oklahoma City completed many major investments through the urban renewal process, city center did not achieve the vitality that downtown proponents envisioned. A new community vision articulated by Mayor Ron Norick resulted in voter approval in 1993 of the $285 million Metropolitan Area Projects MAPS program. MAPS, funded by a five-year one percent
“Very few American cities have ever had the opportunity to re-invent such a large section of their inner-city. Core to Shore represents a special opportunity.”

Mayor Mick Cornett

dedicated sales tax, provided financing on a cash basis for quality of life projects including:
- Bricktown Ballpark and Canal
- Cox Arena
- Oklahoma River Development
- The renovated Civic Center Music Hall built under the 1937 PWA program
- The Cox Convention Center built in 1972 under the OCURA program.

Maps For Kids

This second MAPS round was a ground-breaking initiative by Mayor Kirk Humphries to invest in the City’s children by remaking the city’s educational facilities. MAPS for Kids, approved in 2001 by over 60% of voters, changed State law to combine a seven-year one percent sales tax with a $180 million bond issue to finance a $470 million program to either build new or completely renovate every school in the Oklahoma City Public School district.

Maps III and Core to Shore

The MAPS for Kids sales tax authorization expires in 2008. This provides Oklahoma City with an opportunity to make new investments in the City’s future through a carefully considered group of projects similarly funded by a dedicated sales tax. This could include several public elements of a major effort to strengthen both central Oklahoma City and the entire community by connecting the Downtown Core with the Oklahoma River Shore.

THE CORE TO SHORE PLANNING PROCESS

The Core to Shore planning process began with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation’s (ODOT) planned reconstruction of 7.2 miles of Interstate 40 between Interstate 235 and Meridian Avenue in 1996. “This project responded to several serious problems with the current alignment, including critical safety and functional problems, capacity limitations, and, most importantly, an elevated bridge structure that is deteriorating and showing signs of fatigue, the progressive failure of a structure resulting from heavy repetitive loads.” A corridor selection process identified three alignments, with the preferred option being a semi-depressed mainline along the Union Pacific Railroad corridor south of Oklahoma City’s historic Union Station. This alternative met with substantial concerns from a variety of groups, including members of the Downtown community and representatives of the Riverfront neighborhood.

To address these concerns and investigate how the preferred alternative could fit into an overall urban design framework, the City of Oklahoma City retained RDG Planning & Design and TAP Architecture, in association with EDAW, Inc., to prepare the Interstate 40 Relocation Land Use and Mitigation Plan (February, 2000). This plan viewed the Interstate 40 relocation as an opportunity to redevelop under used or deteriorated areas with a sequence of new urban neighborhoods and public spaces that would link Downtown to the Oklahoma Riverfront. It also recommended development of a Boulevard along the alignment of the current I-40 viaduct as a front door to the city center and catalyst for new Downtown development. In short, the plan proposed converting potential barriers into bridges to link the riverfront and the Downtown core together.
CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Core to Shore District’s pattern of underutilized land on the edge of Downtown, characterized by older industrial uses, warehousing, vacant land, and residential areas that have suffered from disinvestment, is shared by many cities. However, forward-thinking cities have increasingly viewed these forgotten areas as opportunities for an urban renaissance, and, in the process, have reinvigorated their centers. Denver, Portland, Fort Worth, and Salt Lake City are among cities that have transformed these close-in areas and have reaped the benefits of a resurgent center city and robust economic viability. These cities have also been acclaimed as great places to live, marked by urban excitement and high quality livability. The Core to Shore Plan offers Oklahoma City the same opportunity. This section describes the District’s current conditions – the basis for planning an ambitious but realistic vision of the future.

In 2006, with the I-40 relocation project funded and on the road to implementation, Oklahoma City moved forward to advance this community vision by launching the Core to
Shore planning process. The overall goal of the effort was to create a vision and realistic, market-based plan to connect Downtown to the Oklahoma River, based on making strategic civic investments to stimulate major private redevelopment. Mayor Mick Cornett and David Lopez cochaired the Steering Committee of 35 community leaders who spent over a year developing the Core to Shore vision. This document reflects the work of that Committee and summarizes the Core to Shore recommendations.

The Core to Shore district encompasses roughly 575 acres as shown on map in context. When fully realized, this new urban center will include:

- Three new residential neighborhoods accommodating up to 3,000 households, along with up to 500,000 square feet of new retail, and 2 to 4 million square feet of new office space

"Redevelopment brings the added advantage of renewing the land and cleaning up the environment"

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS AND UTILITIES

Redevelopment of older industrial areas presents considerable challenges. Uses such as auto salvage and parts operations, oil refining, tanning facilities, and underground gasoline storage tanks often suggest potential environmental problems that will require mitigation. Older buildings are likely to contain asbestos, requiring special handling during their removal for parks or redevelopment. However, investigation of environmental records of the Core to Shore District indicates that the sites can be mitigated using well-known, proven methods. Indeed, redevelopment brings the added advantage of renewing the land and cleaning up the environment.

The District has more than 20 public and private utilities, many of which are outdated. The Core to Shore Team has identified several that will lack capacity when implementation of this plan begins. These include water, wastewater, as well as the electrical supply, furnished by OG&E Energy Corporation (OG&E). The communications utilities have recently made upgrades in the study area.

It is common practice among utility owners to respond to development needs when implementation is certain. Understandably, they do this to avoid expensive upgrades for development that may never happen. However, in the case of the Core to Shore District, development utility work could delay projects a year or more if there is no preplanning. Utilities, their coordination, implementation, and fee structures are complex and need to be managed to ensure timely development.

For example, the location of the Convention Center will require OG&E to move its substation. The City and OG&E have discussed this relocation during the course of this project. Removal of transition lines in strategic locations like the Harvey Avenue corridor will also be

Union Station from the south, with USPS building to the north
required to realize the plan concept. Because utility relocation and upgrade can be expensive and time-consuming, the City should convene a Utility Task Force to coordinate and direct the upgrades required for the Core to Shore Project implementation.

The Utility Task Force should be led by the City’s Public Works Department, and will include City utilities, private utilities, and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, which is coordinating implementation of the new I-40 alignment with utilities. The utility task force should explore the need for additional utility corridors under the new I-40 alignment that will be necessary to serve the Core to Shore District’s development. Likewise, coordinating utility work with street upgrades will be useful to avoid digging up a street that has just been reconstructed. This group’s task will be completion of a utility upgrade plan in coordination with the Core to Shore implementation, minimizing the time needed to prepare for development. The Task Force’s work will indicate to potential developers that the City is moving forward with the Core to Shore District implementation, and is acting to accelerate private development projects.

A report and maps, “The Core to Shore Background Report,” of the environmental conditions and utilities for the Core to Shore District, developed concurrently with this plan, is available from the Oklahoma City Planning Department.

BUILDINGS

Most of the Core to Shore District’s building stock is a mixture of industrial buildings, brick warehouse structures, storage yards, and older residences surrounded by vacant land. Many of these structures are in poor condition. Only two buildings in the study area – Little Flower Church and Union Station – are so historically or architecturally important as to require preservation. The Little Flower Church is an important place for Oklahoma City’s Hispanic population and the City. However, the Church’s immediate environment does little either to support its special importance or to support its community role. Similarly, Union Station is a significant landmark for the community and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A large postal distribution facility blocks views of the historic façade, and the station’s environment diminishes its presence on the street. The building currently contains offices for COTPA (Central Oklahoma Transit and Parking Authority) and another small business.

While no other buildings achieve the landmark status of Little Flower Church and Union Station, the district has some older buildings that potential developers may incorporate into new
projects. For example, the Latin Community Development Association building, formerly a brick schoolhouse on Walker Avenue south of the new I-40 alignment, could be rehabilitated and included in the development proposed for its block as a signature building.

“The Core to Shore Project will guide growth and development for the next round of civic building in Oklahoma City.”

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND LAND

The 575-acre Core to Shore District will more than double the size of the Downtown core. As such, it is the largest tract of land close to Downtown Oklahoma City available for redevelopment.

While single property owners own some entire blocks, most blocks have multiple owners. There are few significant multi-block assemblages west of Shields Boulevard, the postal facility being on exception. About one-quarter of the land in the study area north of the Union Pacific east-west rail line is currently held by tax-exempt entities, including Goodwill Industries, the US Postal Service, COTPA, and the Salvation Army.

Other large landowners include:

- A large electrical substation owned by OG&E Electrical Services at the corner of Shields Boulevard and the I-40 viaduct.
- The Producers Cooperative Oil Mill, east of Shields Boulevard and south of the I-40 viaduct.
- A used motor vehicle parts storage facility, south on the Oklahoma River east of Shields Avenue.

MARKET ANALYSIS

The market analysis, completed as part of the Core to Shore Plan, indicates the area’s strong potential for successful redevelopment. This prognosis is based on:

- The age and condition of the buildings and their low value compared to the land value
- The potential return on investment for modern, more densely developed property
- The upcoming removal of the I-40 viaduct, which sharply divided the study area from Downtown, along with the prospect of redevelopment that will follow

Based on current absorption rates and comparisons to similar projects in such comparable cities as Salt Lake, Denver, Portland, and Boise, the market can absorb the following development in the Core to Shore area in the next ten to twenty years.

- 3,000 housing units, including single family homes, condominiums, high-rise residential units, multi-family units, and apartments, over the next 15 to 20 years
- A town center retail concentration of 250,000 to 550,000 square feet over 5 to 10 years
- Office space built to suit a particular client or corporation according to their specifications and space requirements
- A 400,000 to 1,000,000 square foot convention center
- A 500-room convention center hotel with 50,000 square feet of internal meeting space
- Two smaller hotels for the convention center and other visitors
- Neighborhood-serving businesses such as restaurants, health clubs, coffee shops, and convenience stores

Downtown Oklahoma City from the southeast
Shields Boulevard looking north from the Oklahoma River
Robinson Avenue from the Oklahoma River looking north
Assuming an average household size of 2.0 to 2.5 people and the potential to add approximately 3,000 housing units, the Core to Shore District’s ultimate population could range between 6,000 and 7,500 people, generating a demand for the following civic amenities:

- A recreation center
- A school, most likely an elementary school, that could also be a community center for continuing education, neighborhood meetings, and recreation
- A library
- Parks and open space

Beyond these amenities, the Core to Shore District also provides the opportunity to build City amenities such as mentioned in list above, an events center, a cultural institution, or large sports facility.

For further information, please refer to the “Core to Shore Market Analysis” available from the Oklahoma City Planning Department.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Currently the land between the I-40 viaduct and Downtown is underutilized and represents a challenging opportunity for Oklahoma City.
- Environmental clean-up will be necessary on some sites using well-known and standard clean-up methods.
- Many of the utilities are outdated and lack capacity, which could delay implementation.
- Only two buildings require preservation because of their historical and architectural importance, but developers may choose to adapt other existing buildings into new development.
- With the exception of a few users, land remains largely unassembled, which could delay development.
- The area is an excellent candidate for planned redevelopment based on market analysis, land use absorption rates, and the impending demolition of the I-40 viaduct.
- The Core to Shore area is a logical and strategic place to redevelop a vibrant close-in Downtown neighborhood with attractive civic amenities and a strong connection to the Oklahoma River.

**ACTIONS**

- The City should encourage private sector assembly of land for redevelopment.
- The City should convene a Utilities Task Force to manage utility issues and upgrades, within the Core to Shore District.
- With input from the Utility Task Force, the City should coordinate with ODOT to ensure adequate utility easements across its new I-40 alignment and should explore additional easements.
- The City should coordinate utility improvements, such as wastewater and storm water improvements that require the streets and rights-of-way to be excavated, with streetscape implementation to achieve maximum benefit and cost savings.
The Core to Shore Framework Master Plan relied on the work of a strong Steering Committee that represented wide community interests and had the determination to create a bold and pragmatic vision that will change Oklahoma City’s Downtown forever. The Committee worked by consensus to establish project objectives and debate various land use schemes that would best serve Oklahoma City over the next decades. The Core to Shore Objectives capture the sense of the Steering Committee discussions and are a guide for the City in making decisions about both public and private developments that will be proposed for the Core to Shore District.

The diagrams that depict the evolution of the land use plans in this section show the ideas that the Committee considered, debated, and, either included or eliminated. The Land Use Map, at the end of this chapter, illustrates the final arrangement of neighborhoods, parks, civic buildings, roadways, and commercial development that will combine to connect the Downtown to the Oklahoma River and fulfill the Core to Shore Objectives.

Undoubtedly, specific project proposals will raise new questions, add more detail, and require adjustments to the Plan as development unfolds. This Framework Master Plan, deliberately designed to be flexible, can accommodate these adjustments while remaining true to the vision created by the Steering Committee.

“The Committee envisioned a bold plan that would establish Oklahoma City’s place as one of America’s most livable cities.”

STEERING COMMITTEE

In September of 2006, Oklahoma City’s Mayor Mick Cornett appointed a 33-member Steering Committee, composed of key stakeholders and community leaders, to guide the Core to Shore planning program. The Committee’s assignment was to ensure a plan that:

- Guided growth and development in a manner tailored to the needs and culture of Oklahoma City
- Complemented existing development in Downtown and Bricktown
- Established a new Boulevard as a signature entry into Oklahoma City
- Created lively urban neighborhoods that were designed for diverse populations
Included sites for future civic amenities such as a new convention center
Created a large gathering space for the City and parks that connected the Downtown to the Oklahoma River
Promoted pedestrian and outdoor activity
Included economic generators to fuel the City’s economy and stimulate growth

Mayor Mick Cornett chaired the Committee with Vice-Chair David Lopez, who brought the perspective of the private development sector to the planning effort. The Committee represented a cross-section of interests including property owners, cultural arts, churches, real estate interests, developers, members of the City Council, and County Commissioners. Together, they discussed locations for parks, neighborhoods, a new convention center, a transit center, corporate headquarters, retail development, river access, pedestrian paths, and community sports facilities.

At its first meeting, the Committee articulated its ambitious hopes for the plan. The Committee envisioned a bold plan that would establish Oklahoma City’s place as one of America’s most livable cities. Its members were united in their determination to move in new directions and create a working plan that was both exciting and practical – a plan to reignite Oklahoma City’s center and attract people Downtown to live and enjoy the vitality of their city.

The Committee analyzed and debated many ideas, centering on the nature of development and the arrangement and relationships of the features that would transform the Core to Shore area into a distinctive urban district. The following pages show how the plan evolved during the Committee’s nine-month period of deliberation. The design objectives and urban design patterns that follow are based on the discussions and insights of Committee members. The Plan in this document result from these discussions and is supported by the Steering Committee.

“The rich combination of employment, culture, heritage, recreation, and entertainment provides the foundation for creating a world-class living environment.”

CORE TO SHORE OBJECTIVES

The Core to Shore Steering Committee held a series of discussions centered on what kind of development in the project area would best fit Oklahoma City and reinforce the central core.

The Core to Shore Plan contains a mix of land uses that work together to reinforce these objectives. As Oklahoma City implements this Plan, the City will use these objectives to guide development and measure specific project proposals. This will ensure that the values and ideas put
forth by the Steering Committee remain at the forefront as implementation occurs
over the next two or three decades. Below are objectives that the design team
derived from those discussions and used to test alternative land-use scenarios.

Connect the Oklahoma City Downtown core to the Oklahoma River

Oklahoma City’s downtown lies north of the Oklahoma River and like many burgeoning cities, connecting to the river has become a driving goal. Water attracts people not only for recreation, but also as a place to live and work. Cities such as Vancouver, San Diego, Chicago, Portland, and San Antonio are renowned for their development along waterfronts and rivers. These water-oriented communities establish a powerful image for their respective cities, stimulate the economy, and are destinations for visitors and residents alike.

Make Core to Shore the new neighborhood for Oklahoma City – a great place to live for a wide range of people.

Like Stapleton in Denver, and Dearborn Park and the South Loop in Chicago, the Core to Shore District can be Oklahoma City’s emerging neighborhood, redirecting growth that goes to the suburban edges, back into the City center. The rich combination of employment, culture, heritage, recreation, and entertainment provides the foundation for creating a world-class living environment unique to Oklahoma City and rare in the nation – a lively and sustainable neighborhood for people at all stages of life.

Return the under-utilized land between Downtown and the Oklahoma River to full economic productivity.

The Core to Shore site in its current condition, characterized by marginal uses, scattered homes, and vacant land, has a low assessed value and uses infrastructure inefficiently. Redevelopment allows the city to capitalize economically on its investment in infrastructure and amenities, increasing tax revenues and realizing a handsome return from its previous Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) capital investments.

Become the urban fabric that links Oklahoma City’s neighborhoods and communities together and to the heart of the city.

The Core to Shore District will be a vital urban neighborhood that not only connects Downtown to the river, but also links the entire city together. In the Core to Shore concept, features that were previously barriers – the I-40 freeway, the railroad corridor, and the River itself – become events along Oklahoma City’s “necklace” of neighborhoods that include Paseo, Heritage Hills, 10th Street, Bricktown, and Capitol Hill.

Create an active and engaging waterfront along the Oklahoma River.

Downtown Oklahoma City has the opportunity to benefit from its proximity to the river and realize the same advantages as other cities that have done so such as Portland and Denver. The City has a recent history of waterway development with its 1999 Bricktown Canal in the historic entertainment district. The Oklahoma River has the added bonus of being a growing first class rowing facility for competitive rowing crews, kayak enthusiasts and pleasure rowers.
Provide Oklahoma City with a great central community-gathering place on a par with other successful American cities.

Great cities are symbolized by great outdoor places – New York by Central Park; Chicago by the Lake front and more recently by Millennium Park; Denver by Commons Park; and San Francisco by Golden Gate Park. The Core to Shore District will provide Oklahoma City with such a community place, one that celebrates the City’s cultures, is a place for recreation or quiet contemplation, and provides a venue for important civic amenities and events.

URBAN DESIGN PATTERNS

The urban design patterns were derived during the Steering Committee process to define how parts of the Core to Shore relate to one another and establish patterns that, when realized will create a distinctive and interconnected urban district. These patterns consider the sequences of moving through and within the district and connections that the built environment makes to its users. They also establish the nature of spaces designed to strengthen the experience of living in what will become one of Oklahoma City’s most dynamic districts.

A Hierarchy of Spaces

The Core to Shore District will provide a spectrum of spaces that range from the city’s most public “central park” to private outdoor space within residential blocks. Residential design will reflect this hierarchy, providing a clear transition from the public street to the privacy of interior space.

Strong Street Definition and Urban Edges

The quality of the urban street and block is fundamental to the Core to Shore Plan. Developments will strongly define the street and open space, providing a strong urban edge and preserving the grid plan of much of traditional Oklahoma City. Blocks will typically provide high building coverage. The streets themselves will be tree-lined and inviting.

Activity on the Street

Projects at all scales will treat the street as a front door, avoiding blank, unarticulated walls, and providing a sense of life and transparency to the outside environment. Primary entrances to private and civic buildings will be oriented to the public realm. Surface parking lots and structures like parking garages that do not engage the street environment will be hidden from direct public view.

Variety of Living Environments

The Core to Shore Plan will provide for a variety of neighborhood settings and housing types to encourage a diverse population. The range of development should include towers that emphasize views, high coverage urban housing, townhomes, and single-family homes that reflect the scale of the original Riverside Neighborhood. These different kinds of housing are located in areas that capitalize on their individual qualities and features.
Mixed Uses

Development in the Core to Shore District will avoid a monoculture of single use zoning. Each development type should have the potential to incorporate retail, service, or even office uses. Mixed uses may be integrated into one building, or may involve interchangeable parts that can accommodate different uses easily.

High Residential Density

The Core to Shore District should be a high-density urban development area, maximizing yield while respecting the nature and preferences of the Oklahoma City marketplace. High quality open spaces and parks will balance the high-density development and offer a variety of park types and degrees of privacy.

Sequence of Parks and Open Spaces

The Core to Shore Plan includes a sequence and rhythm of open spaces. A thread that begins at Myriad Gardens in Downtown and connects through retail development to the City’s most important new park, Central Park, continues through a more finely scaled, linear park, Promenade Park, to the river. Park designs should include a series of connected but distinct outdoor “rooms” that frame views and add complexity and pleasant surprises to the sequence.

Gateways and Bridges

The procession within the Core to Shore District will move through gateways at key transition points, where the expansive space of parks narrows to a critical passage defined by a landmark. These transition points include the passage from the Myriad Gardens to the Boulevard, the entrance to Central Park, the I-40 pedestrian bridge crossing, the waterfront gateway, and the passage to the south bank of the Oklahoma River. Each gateway is highly visible along the sequence of spaces, and provides a distinctive experience for the user. Each gateway converts a potential barrier into a bridge that knits the community together.

Boulevard as an Iconic Feature

A grand Boulevard along the former route of I-40 will create the unifying edge between the Downtown Core and the Core to Shore District. The Boulevard is the ceremonial entrance into Downtown, contrasting with the freeway environment by its landscape, adjacent development, and civic design. The Boulevard will build from and amplify the tradition of Boulevards that was part of the original plan for Oklahoma City and is evident in the existing built environment.

Publicly Accessible Waterfront

The Oklahoma River shore is the climax of the progression of spaces that lead from Downtown to the river. This area will have maximum public use and exposure to water as well as provide clear connections and points of entrance to the riverfront park. Just as the parks and open space unify the neighborhoods north and south, the waterfront unifies the City east and west. The riverfront provide spaces for public events as well as individual enjoyment. The waterfront development and open space will give the Core to Shore neighborhood its unique and desirable character.
The initial phase of the Core to Shore Plan limited the study to the area north of I-40. This phase included three basic concepts: a large park, three blocks in width, connecting Myriad Gardens to I-40 (drawing A); a retail district between the Boulevard and the Myriad Gardens and a narrower park (drawing B); and a small park surrounded by residential and commercial development (drawing C).

From the beginning of the planning process, a north-south pedestrian axis starting from the Crystal Bridge of the Myriad Gardens and extending south to connect to the Oklahoma River was central to every concept.

In December 2006, the study area grew to include the area south of I-40 and the three alternatives reflected this expansion. Commercial uses lining the Boulevard were added to all three concepts, each of which also explored different locations for the convention center and a football stadium. The Steering Committee dropped the stadium from further consideration as a result of their discussions.

Alternative A, the “Big Park Concept” featured a 3-block wide park extending from the Boulevard to the river. Alternative B, “The Marina Concept” proposed a 2-block wide park entirely north of I-40. Alternative C “The Small Park Concept” included an elliptical park internal to the neighborhood north of I-40.
The Steering Committee directed the Project Team to explore two- and three-block park options north of I-40, connected to a narrower linear park that would continue the open space system to the Oklahoma River. The Team also explored adding marinas or small inland lakes at the shore side of the study area, as a means of amplifying the waterfront theme.

In January 2007 consideration focused on two concepts: a three-block wide park north of I-40 with convention center east of the BNSF corridor (option A); and a two-block wide park north of I-40 with a convention center fronting the park west of Shields Boulevard (option B). The two concepts also explored different ways to develop the land south of I-40, with emphasis on the area around the Little Flower Church.

Discussions focused on selecting preferred elements from each option and reconfiguring them for the Committee’s consideration.

In February 2007, the plan drawing began to illustrate streets and buildings drawn more accurately, testing the scale of the development concepts. At this stage, most of the major ideas had begun to take shape.
In March, the Committee analyzed and discussed two drawings focusing on major variables still under consideration. These issues included the convention center location, and the civic versus residential use of the west side of the park.

The Team refined the options described in the previous pair of alternatives. At the same time, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber began a feasibility study to locate a new convention center and determine its size and other parameters. At this point, the City and the Chamber decided that the primary site for consideration in that study would be the parcel fronting the park, west of Shields Boulevard.
With the convention center location resolved, the planning process then focused on refinements to concepts for a convention center hotel, Boulevard commercial development, and the Wheeler Park Neighborhood.
Land Use Plan: This drawing illustrates the concepts described in this plan and their relationship to each other. (The completed land use Plan shows how the major parks connect the downtown to the shore of the Oklahoma River, and how the Boulevard, Walker, and Robinson create a framework for civic and commercial uses, and how the civic uses, in turn support the neighborhoods.)
A cohesive plan for a new urban district grows from a clear framework of strong organizing features and principles. This section describes the Framework of the Core to Shore Plan by presenting its various elements in layers. As these layers are overlaid on each other, the basic diagram for the district emerges. This diagram then guides the design of the Plan's more detailed elements, and expresses the objectives and urban design patterns developed during the Steering Committee process.

1. Oklahoma City’s current downtown area, initiated in the late 1800s as a commercial and railroad center, grew from the Bricktown area to what is now the core of Downtown. It lies approximately one mile north of the Oklahoma River. A canal, completed in 1999 in Bricktown, was an initiative to create a City waterway for economic development and entertainment. It was the first step in bringing water into the urban environment.

2. Over time, the City built public parks in the Downtown and along the Oklahoma River, but the two remained separated by industrial uses, vacant lands, and intermittent residential properties. The MAPS (Metropolitan Area Projects) sales tax initiative funded the building of the Bricktown Ballpark, the Cox Convention Center, and the Ford Center. The Army Corps of Engineers began flood control measures on the river in the 1950s. The MAPS initiative added low water dams and river trails starting in the late 1990s, but the river remained isolated from the Downtown.

3. Robinson and Walker Avenues connect the Downtown to the neighborhoods south of the River. Today, the I-40 viaduct forms a hard barrier between the core and the river. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) is planning to move that portion of I-40 south one-half mile and depress the roadway. This opens up the opportunity to create a new Boulevard when ODOT removes the old viaduct. The Boulevard will be both a destination place, complete with high quality streetscape, public art, wide sidewalks, retail, and entertainment venues, as well as a new entry point to the center. Design excellence, enduring materials, and engaging adjacent restaurants and retail will characterize the Boulevard. It will symbolize Oklahoma’s forward thinking attitude and community pride.
4. New parks and a pedestrian path connecting the Core to the Shore are the foundation for redevelopment. The Harvey Avenue alignment will become the pedestrian spine that connects Downtown to the River. The spine will proceed south of Myriad Gardens through the new commercial mixed-use property, cross the Boulevard, to the new 40-acre Central Park, and cross over I-40 on a pedestrian bridge. It will then continue south along the 30-acre Promenade Park to the Oklahoma River. A pedestrian bridge will cross the river to a small amphitheater in Wiley Post Park. State-of-the-art design will define the image of this processional path and help the Core to Shore District attract new housing and commercial development.

5. Civic buildings, a new convention center, an events center in Central Park, a smaller events venue in the Union Station building, and perhaps a new museum adjacent to the Boulevard will attract residents and visitors. The new civic development will invigorate the District and give it structure and a sense of permanence and organization.

6. A 50-acre commercial mixed-use development along the north side of the Boulevard will define the edge of the Downtown core. This project will include up to 500,000 feet of retail and two to four million square feet of corporate office space. The towers have the flexibility to accommodate other uses, such as high-rise housing or hotel. The market will ultimately determine the size and mix of this development. The ground level will provide street-oriented retail with restaurants facing the Boulevard and Central Park. The combination of civic amenities and new redevelopment will complement the Downtown and energize the Core to Shore District.
7. The Producers Cooperative Oil Mill and a car parts storage yard currently occupy the industrial land west of Shields Boulevard. These areas will become more valuable as the Core to Shore District develops. They could become a business park or sports facility site. Any new development would have to include new access roads and a bridge across the Oklahoma River to make the properties more developable.

8. The West Park Neighborhood is south of the Boulevard and west of Central Park. It can accommodate 1,400 households and has a one-block neighborhood green at its center. The proximity of Downtown and Central Park adds value to this neighborhood. It is also within easy walking distance of employment, recreation, and a growing number of amenities such as the Oklahoma Museum of Art and Bricktown.

9. The Wheeler Park Neighborhood, north of the Oklahoma River and south of the new I-40 alignment, is primarily a new urban single-family home neighborhood. Front porches, tree-lined streets, and yards will distinguish this neighborhood of about 150 homes. Wheeler Park Neighborhood’s character makes it a logical place for a school/community center and a library, benefiting all of the Core to Shore District. Little Flower Plaza will place the historic church in the traditional setting of an urban square surrounded by neighborhood retail and restaurants to add activity. Wheeler Park Neighborhood also includes several multi-story residential buildings along the new Riverside Drive. This new roadway provides additional access to the river, the Neighborhood, and I-40.
10. The North Shore neighborhood consists of the Mews, Riverlake, Parkview and River Towers developments is located between the new I-40 alignment on the north and the Oklahoma River on the south, Walker Avenue on the west, and Shields on the east. The Riverlake development will add to the waterfront experience and will be surrounded by restaurants and retail. Two residential point River Towers will mark the pedestrian spine at the shore and form a gateway to the Oklahoma River. Condominiums, apartments, town homes, and multi-family housing comprise the rest of the neighborhood, which features the 30-acre Promenade Park at its center and an amphitheater across the river to the south.

This completes the Framework Plan, a diagram designed to guide public and private redevelopment of the Core to Shore District. The powerful ideas of this Framework will forever change Oklahoma City for the better. The dense urban development augmented by grand civic spaces is logical, strategic, and economically sound.
The fundamental elements of the Core to Shore Framework Master Plan include:

- The Boulevard
- Parks and Public Space
- Civic Amenities
- The Neighborhoods
- Moving About

The character and location of each element enhances its surroundings and contributes to a distinctive and unified urban environment in the District, where the whole exceeds the sum of its parts. The following presentation describes these elements along with illustrative drawings. The drawings provide a sense of the character of each area, but are not intended to prescribe a specific architecture or design.

The elements presented here are the distinguishing features of the Core to Shore Plan. The Steering Committee had long and intense discussions about the nature and relationships of these elements, because their interaction defines the quality of the Core to Shore District as a special precinct within Oklahoma City. The resulting urban design pattern will energize each part of the District, creating a memorable environment that is a magnet for people. As the Core to Shore District’s neighborhoods, civic buildings, parks, and the Boulevard emerge, they will inevitably lead in new directions, and stimulate more amenities, ideas, and places – the organic and living process that creates our best environments. The energy created by this process will transform not just this study area, but all of Oklahoma City.

As implementation of the Core to Shore District occurs during the next two to three decades, new information and opportunities will inevitably emerge. This Framework Master Plan is designed to accommodate new ideas and be flexible to change without diminishing its basic integrity or its ability to guide development.
THE BOULEVARD AND ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVES

- Build a new Boulevard that is both a great urban place and an iconic gateway to Downtown, and an image feature for the City.
- Make the Boulevard a gracious and welcoming environment for its users, characterized by:
  - A dense tree canopy along the street and sidewalk
  - A layered design that provides specific domains for moving traffic
  - Parking, local access, and pedestrians
  - Contemporary street furnishings and lights that nevertheless have a timeless and permanent quality
  - Low traffic speeds and slow speeds transitioning from the highway to the Boulevard
- Ensure that the Boulevard’s underpass at the BNSF railroad bridge east of Shields is built so that the Boulevard is continuous and inviting from Walker to Oklahoma Avenues
- Create an interplay of intensive development on the north side of the Boulevard with a signature green space on the south side.
- Establish a strong edge to the Downtown Core with a dense, urban mixed-use development that may incorporate:
  - Active, street-oriented retailing that complements Bricktown and Downtown retail uses
  - Class A office space for corporate headquarters or other build-to-suit employers
  - A hotel and/or high-rise housing

VISION

The pulse of a great city often beats along a great street. The Champs Elysees in Paris, Princess Street in Edinburgh, State Street in Chicago, Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia, Fifth Avenue in New York City, the new Embarcadero Boulevard in San Francisco, and many others – these streets conjure up images of the life of their respective cities. These streets and grand boulevards have different dimensions but also share certain characteristics. Their often tree-lined landscape and adjacent architecture capture their city’s spirits. They boast generously proportioned sidewalks that host sidewalk cafes, informal seating, public art, and special landscaping. Their durable, high quality materials underline their permanence, and specialty lighting distinguishes their environments after dark.

Oklahoma City’s new Boulevard will replace the old Interstate 40 overpass with its own version of such a great street, pivotal to the realization of the Core to Shore Plan. The Boulevard is scheduled for completion eighteen months after the opening of the new I-40 mainline in 2012. The finished Boulevard will be at surface level between Walker Avenue on the west and Oklahoma Avenue on the east.
In the Core to Shore concept, the Boulevard fulfills three roles. First and foremost, it will be a special place – a destination that draws people to enjoy its restaurants, retail, and sidewalk cafés. Second, it will be the Downtown’s gateway from Interstate 40, defining people’s first impression of Oklahoma City. Third, the Boulevard is the seam that connects the Downtown Core and the new neighborhoods and parks that lead to the shore of the Oklahoma River.

“The contrasting land uses on the north and south sides of the Boulevard, very dense and urban on the north and open and green on the south, create the interplay of environments that create memorable city places”
The three types of Boulevards were discussed by the Steering Committee, which chose Boulevard Type 3.
To fill these roles, the Boulevard has been carefully designed to be:

- An urban place that creates the atmosphere – both comfortable and inspiring – that attracts people and encourages them to stay to enjoy the life of a great city;
- A grand entrance into the City for pedestrians, vehicles, and bicyclists – where the pedestrians are primary and vehicles slow to accommodate them;
- An image center for Oklahoma City with gracious sidewalks, multiple rows of trees, artwork, and durable, high-quality materials.

While the design quality of the Boulevard environment is very important, the edges ultimately define the character of the corridor. Major mixed use development, including substantial retailing, restaurants, office towers, and potentially a hotel and high-rise housing, lines the north side of the Boulevard. The development design will reinforce the pedestrian spine as it extends from the Myriad Gardens along the Harvey Avenue alignment to the Boulevard. The south side of the Boulevard is the entrance to Central Park, which will become the City’s preeminent public gathering space and park. The new convention center and a civic institution, potentially a major museum, flank the park to the east and west respectively, adjacent to the Boulevard.

This contrast of built and open space on the north and south side of the Boulevard creates:

- a strong urban edge of new buildings that establishes the southern boundary of the Downtown core and concentrates retail and restaurant development in a signature public environment; and
- a handsomely landscaped and designed park defined by new civic buildings to form both the northern edge of the Core to Shore District and a foreground for the Downtown skyline.

This urban corridor both symbolically and actually connects the Core and Shore environments.

The contrasting land uses on the north and south sides of the Boulevard, very dense and urban on the north and open and green on the south, create the interplay of environments that create memorable city places. Fifth Avenue in New York, Michigan Avenue in the Chicago Loop, and San Francisco’s Embarcadero illustrate the power of this interaction between dense development and great open space along a street corridor. It will also provide the distinctive and visually engaging environment that will make the Boulevard an iconic gateway to Oklahoma City.
BOULEVARD DESIGN AND STREETSCAPE

The Boulevard design and streetscape includes several fundamental elements:
- The basic street channel
- Parking slips
- Sidewalk section
- Railroad underpass
- Overall design idiom
- Streetscape elements

"The Boulevard will be a new street, built at the beginning of the 21st Century. Therefore, its character should be contemporary, reflecting its time and setting the tone for new housing and other buildings in the Core to Shore District."

"The best streets are those that can be remembered."
- Alan Jacobs, Great Streets
Basic Street Channel

The Boulevard between Walker Avenue and Oklahoma Boulevards includes two travel lanes in each direction, left turn lanes, and parking lanes on both sides. The parking lane on the north side may be converted to future dedicated transit use, or if needed an additional vehicle lane. The traffic speed will be 25 mph to be conducive to the pedestrian environment.

Parking Slips

The north side of the Boulevard and the western most block on the south side have slips with parallel parking on both sides. These slips are separated from the travel lanes by 35-foot landscaped side medians with two rows of trees set in a bed of small crushed stone (called “crusher fines”) that forms a smooth surface. Concrete edge strips, between 18 and 24 inches wide, are provided along the back of the side median’s curbs, providing easy access to parked cars.
Sidewalk Section

Between Walker and Oklahoma Avenues, 25-foot wide sidewalks, wide enough to accommodate outdoor cafes, front the buildings. A single line of trees runs along the curb edge next to the parking slip. A simple scoring pattern will punctuate these primarily concrete sidewalks, while local red granite will provide a decorative edge and accent.

Railroad Underpass

The north-south Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railroad embankment and overpasses, paralleling Shields Boulevard and separating Downtown from Bricktown, poses a special challenge to the Boulevard’s character. The detailed Boulevard design must provide visual continuity among the Core to Shore District, Bricktown, and future development sites to the south. Pedestrians must feel comfortable walking along the entire length of the Boulevard, including the passage under the railroad. Design criteria for the Boulevard under the BNSF include:

- Minimum depression of the Boulevard as it passes under the railroad bridge
- A 200 to 250-foot opening under the bridge, accommodating six lanes of traffic, a fifteen foot sidewalk on each side, and columns in the median and at the sidewalk edge that will reduce the length of the span and, consequently, the depth of the bridge structure
• A raised sidewalk under the bridge, if the road grade allows it, with a decorative rail consistent with the Boulevard streetscape. This minimizes grades for pedestrians and separates them from the moving traffic, creating a more comfortable and safe pedestrian path.
• Artwork and continuous lighting under the bridge and along the abutments, unified with the Boulevard streetscape
• Materials and maintenance practices that keep the Boulevard and underpass clean and free of graffiti. A sense of user security is especially important in ensuring that the Boulevard provides a continuous and comfortable link from Walker to Oklahoma Avenues.

Overall Design Idiom

The Boulevard will be a new street, built at the beginning of the 21st Century. Therefore, its character should be contemporary, reflecting its time and setting the tone for new housing and other buildings in the Core to Shore District. This will distinguish it from Bricktown, which is genuinely historic, and Downtown, an eclectic mix of traditional and modern architecture.

Streetscape Elements

A distinctive set of street furnishings outfit the sidewalks and side medians. This “kit” of features includes:
- Unique thematic, pedestrian, and streetlights
- Benches and moveable chairs that invite people to enjoy the Boulevard
- Bollards to guide pedestrian movement and cue different uses and environments
- Flower planters to add seasonal color and soften the concrete sidewalk
- Public art

The streetscape kit can also include decorative tree grates, manhole covers, fountains, banners, and plaques. The arrangement of street furnishings should provide pedestrian comfort, establish a design rhythm and pattern, and give a unified look to both sides of the Boulevard.

Streetlights are especially important in setting design direction because of their size and prominence. The efficiency and light quality of streetlights continually improve. Efficient and distinctive state-of-the-art poles and lighting standards, along with other street furnishings, should be selected during the Boulevard’s final design phase.

“Streetlights are especially important in setting design direction because of their size and prominence.”

BOULEVARD MIXED USE

The Boulevard blocks on the north side between Robinson and Walker Avenues are the proposed site for a destination mixed use development, featuring a lifestyle retail and mixed-use commercial center ranging from 250,000 to 500,000 square feet. The street level will house active retailing and restaurants, with entrances, storefront windows, signage, and architectural features providing a strong orientation to the Boulevard and neighboring streets. Desirable retail credits include regional general merchandisers, apparel, and home furnishings.
Downtown currently offers very little retailing except for destination and specialty establishments, such as an upscale jewelry store and a sporting goods outlet. A lifestyle center would bring additional shoppers to Downtown, also benefiting existing establishments. The retail project should complement rather than compete with Bricktown's retail base, made up largely of tourist-oriented boutiques and restaurants.

The Core to Shore District is a strong location for this Downtown retail attraction for the following reasons.

- Oklahoma City has no comparable urban retail center, making this a new product for the region.
- The Core to Shore District can easily accommodate a moderately-sized lifestyle center.
- The site enjoys excellent regional road access, and will be an increasingly important node for public transportation.
- The sense of place created by the Boulevard, existing and future residential populations Downtown and in the Core to Shore District, and the city center’s employment base combine to support the market for a retail center.
- The central location within the region is appealing to new and unique retailers or restaurant businesses entering the Oklahoma City market with a single store. This, in turn, reinforces the specialty retail nature of the district and can anchor a lifestyle center.
- Parking to support retailing can be both integrated into the mixed-use development design and located under the north end of Central Park.
The Boulevard mixed-use concept also provides for two towers, with between two and four million square feet of space, flanking the Harvey Avenue pedestrian spine and on axis with the Myriad Gardens Crystal Bridge. These towers may accommodate office, hotel, or residential uses, or some mix of these uses.

In addition to the Boulevard lifestyle center, the Core to Shore Plan includes other retail areas in civic projects such as the convention center, or in river-oriented mixed-use developments such as Riverlake and River Towers. The Core to Shore Plan also proposes smaller, neighborhood-oriented retail and restaurant areas in strategic locations such as Little Flower Plaza and near the Parkview area along Robinson Avenue.

“\textit{The Core to Shore Plan also proposes smaller, neighborhood-oriented retail and restaurant sites in strategic locations such as Little Flower Plaza and near the Parkview area along Robinson Avenue.}”

\textbf{OFFICE DEVELOPMENT}

The Central Business District (CBD as defined by Price Edwards and Company), including the Core to Shore Plan area, has 5.2 million square feet of office space, of which nearly 1.5 million square feet (or 27.8\%) is vacant, according to research conducted by Price Edwards and Company. Class C space, typically outdated and difficult to lease, accounts for about 61\% of this vacancy. Since Class C space is not attractive to larger corporations, vacancy in quality multi-tenant office space is actually well below the nominal CBD-wide rate.

The Class A office vacancy rate is approximately 15\% with an average rent of $18 to $22 per square foot, insufficient to support new speculative multi-tenant office development. A vacancy rate at or below 10\% and typical rents at or above $25 per square foot are needed to warrant new speculative development. However, the potential need for new headquarters buildings, for either existing local corporations or companies considering a home in Oklahoma City, creates opportunities for build-to-suit offices. The Boulevard mixed-use project and other sites in the southern part of the Core provide locations for high-rise buildings or multi-block campuses. Project design should hide parking from public view by incorporating it into the structure.

\textbf{HOTEL DEVELOPMENT}

The market for new hotel space in Oklahoma City is positive based on the steady increase of hotel rates and occupancy since 1998. Downtown offers about 1,600 hotel rooms in seven hotels, three of which opened in 2007. Business travelers and conventioneers make up the primary customer base. Two of the hotels, the Sheraton and the Marriott Renaissance, also offer a combination of 95,000 square feet of meeting rooms for smaller gatherings than those held at the Cox Convention Center. The recently opened Skirvin Hilton Hotel offers a grand ballroom and additional meeting facilities. These hotel meeting spaces also supplement the convention center for large events.

“The best streets encourage participation. People stop to talk or maybe they sit and watch, as passive participants, taking in what the street has to offer.”

-Alan Jacobs, Great Streets
The market analysis conducted as part of the Core to Shore Plan indicates an average daily rate of $73.16 in 2006, higher than the citywide average and occupancy rates for Oklahoma City. The recent round of hotel construction responded to these figures.

A new convention center in excess of 800,000 square feet, envisioned by this Plan and supported by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, will expand markets for these hotels, and will require additional rooms and meeting spaces. The Plan proposes a hotel as part of this project, but even more rooms will be needed to support the proposed convention center. These rooms could be included in the Boulevard mixed-use development.

**ACTIONS**

- The City should take the lead and develop the final plans for the Boulevard roadway, pedestrian domain, and railroad underpass in coordination with ODOT. The engineering and streetscape should be completed as one effort to ensure that all modes of travel are accommodated and that there is a strong pedestrian environment. The City should develop an implementation agreement between with ODOT addressing financial contributions, construction management, right-of-way delineations, project scheduling, and costs.
- Include a final streetscape design plan in the detailed design process for the Boulevard, thereby incorporating these elements in the construction project.
Work with property owners north of the Boulevard to initiate and implement the Boulevard mixed-use development. Coordinate the mixed-use development with the underground parking at the north end of Central Park. Use tools such as development agreements, overlay zoning, and design guidelines to assure development that reaches the site’s full potential and urban quality.

Establish a local improvement district to manage and maintain the Boulevard to be in place at opening. The improvement district’s scope should include landscape maintenance; snow and ice removal; trash collection; graffiti control; security; signage; upkeep and repair of furnishings, surfaces, and lighting; events and seasonal decorations; and retail programming and promotions.

“In both traditional city development and contemporary redevelopment, great parks have demonstrated their ability to create vital neighborhoods and cities.”

PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACE

OBJECTIVES

- Create a continuous pedestrian spine that uses new parks and public open spaces to connect Downtown to the Oklahoma River.
- Create a network and hierarchy of open spaces, from Central Park to semi-private green spaces, that distinguish the Core to Shore environment and fulfill four roles for the park system: the system as an image center, a public common, a connector, and a catalyst for development.
• Arrange land uses to take advantage of, and integrate with, the river’s edge and the parks.
• Ensure that there are parks or open space within two blocks of any residential development.
• Provide small scale, intimate neighborhood greens internal to the West Park and Wheeler Park Neighborhoods.
• Create an active and engaging riverfront along the Oklahoma River by making the shore accessible.
• Take advantage of the opportunities for world-class sports venues and recreation offered by the Oklahoma River.
• Capitalize on the views of the river, the parks, and Downtown from within the parks and also adjacent development.
• Incorporate the open space network into longer-term future developments such as Bridgewater and the Oil Producers Cooperative Special Use District. Consider linking the Cooperative site, when it is ready to develop, to Bricktown by extending the Canal.

**VISION**

Parks and public spaces are the foundation of the Core to Shore Plan and organize all other elements of the Plan. In both traditional city development and contemporary redevelopment, great parks have demonstrated their ability to create vital neighborhoods and cities. The Core to Shore Plan’s network of parks and open spaces will have four fundamental roles:

- **Image Transformation**  A distinctive park network will transform the image of the District from an obsolete industrial service area to a vigorous urban neighborhood capable of attracting people back to the center city.
- **Public Common**  Like other great central city parks, Core to Shore’s urban parks will become Oklahoma City’s most intensively used civic open spaces, hosting everything from major community celebrations to a single person enjoying the pulse of the city.
• Downtown to River Promenade. The Core to Shore District’s park system is the method for connecting Downtown Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma River. It provides the processional sequence along the pedestrian spine that brings the river to Downtown, and Downtown to the river.

• Development Catalyst. The District’s planned parks are the primary amenities that generate new development around them. People want to live around great parks, and the Core to Shore District’s open spaces will be the anchors for its new neighborhoods.

The Core to Shore Plan arranges both large and small public spaces to fulfill these four roles. These spaces are conceived as a green hierarchy, from one of Oklahoma City’s most public places to small urban spaces within development blocks, designed for the private enjoyment of immediate neighbors. The green network includes:

• A continuous pedestrian spine connecting Downtown to the Oklahoma River
• A 40-acre Central Park that will be Oklahoma City’s signature public square, a great park designed for civic gatherings, events, and individual enjoyment
• A six-block, 30 acre linear Promenade Park that continues the pedestrian procession from I-40 to the river
• Riverlake, a small lake at the river end of Promenade Park that reinforces the waterfront theme and is a centerpiece for mixed use development
• The Oklahoma River greenway, the completed linear park and trail running east and west along the river’s shore
• Little Flower Plaza, a traditional town square defined by historic Little Flower Church and new neighborhood retail and library.
• Neighborhood one block greens that are centrally located in Wheeler Park and West Park Neighborhoods
• Semi-private open spaces within development blocks

Each component will be an enjoyable and attractive public space, featuring landmarks and public art that lead pedestrians from the Downtown core to the shore of the Oklahoma River.

“The Core to Shore District’s new parks and open spaces complement the existing parks in Downtown and add much needed areas for large public gatherings and event venues.”

THE PEDESTRIAN SPINE

The pedestrian spine is the primary connection between the core and shore, connecting Downtown and the river along the Harvey Avenue alignment. The spine defines a straight path beginning at Myriad Gardens and ultimately crossing the river to Wiley Post Park. However, this path, while clear, will have great subtlety, variety, and rhythm as it passes through a sequence of large spaces and narrower passages. The concept allows people to lose themselves but never be lost as they move through an ever-changing procession of spaces. As people walk from the core to the shore along the pedestrian spine, they will experience:
• The dense urbanism of a pedestrian street through the new retail mixed-use development between Myriad Gardens and the Boulevard, leading to a broad mid-block pedestrian crossing of the Boulevard to Central Park.

• A broad walkway through Central Park, defined by light columns between 10 to 14 feet in height. These columns are part of the public art program that will pervade the Core to Shore park network, and take their inspiration from the glass art of Dale Chihuly, exhibited at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art.

• A specially designed signature pedestrian bridge over the new Interstate 40. This bridge will be a landmark to travelers on I-40 and compatible with historic Union Station.

• A wide path along the eastern edge of the linear Promenade Park along Harvey Avenue, passing by Riverlake, a small lake surrounded by shops and mixed-use development off of the spine to the west.

• A river gateway framed by two residential point towers and leading to the Oklahoma River greenway, with its trail and recreational features, along the north river shore.

• A pedestrian bridge spanning the river to a new amphitheater in Wiley Post Park, designed for small concerts and a sloped lawn for audiences facing the river and skyline in the background.

The pedestrian spine is both the Core to Shore Plan connection and the internal link among the parks of the development district. The overall system, unified by the spine, will:

• Stimulate the local economy by encouraging people to walk and shop in the area

• Encourage year-round opportunities to walk for health and fitness

• Highlight interesting local, historic, and cultural features along the route

• Create a strong sense of place in the community where people enjoy gathering

• Promote pedestrian activity, an essential ingredient of a sustainable community

“*The pedestrian spine is a straight path from downtown to the river, connecting parks, special places and neighborhoods along the way.*”

CENTRAL PARK

Central Park, the first major public space in the Core to Shore Plan’s park sequence, marks the south side of the Boulevard. This large urban park, with about 40 acres of active, passive, and programmed venues in the two block wide area between Robinson and Harvey Avenues, will become Oklahoma City’s public common, the main gathering place for civic events and celebrations. The City should acquire the blocks west of the main park, between Harvey and Walker, as part of the public space acquisition to provide possible homes on the green for major civic institutions. The final use of these blocks will be determined when implementation begins.

Like other great parks in leading cities, Oklahoma City’s Central Park will create the image for the surrounding neighborhood. This park will be the public living room for the entire community – a memorable place where residents and visitors enjoy a dynamic urban space, engage in the life of the city, and experience the sense of fun and festivity that is the essence of city life.
The facility program for Central Park includes:

- Structures and spaces that accommodate major community events such as the Oklahoma City Festival of the Arts
- Children’s play area
- Small water bodies, fountains or other water features
- Shaded areas with attractive landscape
- A “Great Lawn” for both large gatherings and unstructured, multi-purpose open space
- Sculpture and public art
- An events center
- A formal garden
- An underground garage for 1,000 cars

The underground garage should be coordinated with the Boulevard’s mixed-use development to provide efficient, joint-use parking. Good precedents for this arrangement include Union Square in San Francisco and Millennium Park in Chicago. Ideally, the parking garage should provide a weather-protected concourse under the Boulevard to the new retail and mixed use development for maximum customer comfort.

Central Park will be a premier public place and landmark, adding value to the surrounding real estate and transforming the image of the neighborhood. Similar parks have been the key to development programs in American cities that have changed outdated industrial areas at the fringe of downtowns into thriving and urbane neighborhoods that energize city centers.

“Central Park is the catalyst project that will change the image of the project area and provide a large gathering space for events and festivals.”

**PROMENADE PARK AND RIVERLAKE**

From Central Park, the open space sequence passes between the restored Union Station and the new Events Center and over Interstate 40 on a dramatic pedestrian bridge to Promenade Park. This linear open space, stretching for six blocks from I-40 to 15th Street serves dual functions. It continues the pedestrian spine south to the Oklahoma River. It is also the neighborhood park and catalyst for development of the North Shore Neighborhood. As such, it includes multi-purpose lawns and open spaces, active recreation areas for court games, and smaller play areas.

The Riverlake mixed-use development adjoins Promenade Park near its southern end. A small lake is the centerpiece of this development. A boardwalk around the lake, lined by cafes, and neighborhood and destination retail, connects back to Promenade Park and the pedestrian spine.
THE OKLAHOMA RIVER GREENWAY

Two residential point towers frame a gateway to mark the transition between Promenade Park and the Oklahoma River shore. A “beacon”, a vertical iconic object of art that may incorporate a wind sculpture or a viewing platform, celebrates the river just beyond the towers and marks the intersection of the north-south spine and the east-west riverfront greenway, with its extensive multi-use trail network. A new pedestrian bridge will cross the river to a Wiley Post Park amphitheater on the south bank. The amphitheater provides spectators with a view back across the river, through the towers, and north to the downtown skyline.

The riverbank itself should engage people enjoying its features and open spaces. Stone “rip-rap” currently lines the shore as part of the flood control program for the river. This material and the steep angle of the bank make it nearly impossible to walk to the water’s edge. To make the river more accessible, the City and the Army Core of Engineers should work to create a gentler, grass-covered slope to the river’s edge. This may involve placing rip-rap beneath the grass to stabilize the slope in case of a major flood. This concept will require further study during plan implementation.

The river itself can be used for boating and is gaining popularity as a highly desirable rowing venue. These activities are popular with both participants and spectators, who enjoy watching the practices and competitive races of the rowboats and kayaks housed upstream in the new Chesapeake Boathouse and brought in for competitive events. The Oklahoma River’s excellent accommodations for these sports will increase its popularity and open the possibility of additional boathouses and even selection as an Olympic rowing training center. More events mean more spectators, further enriching life in the Core to Shore District.

However, one need not be an athlete to experience the fun of the river. Oklahoma City, buoyed by the success of water taxies on the Bricktown Canal, has recently purchased water ferries for travel on and across the Oklahoma River. A small marina and dock to the east of Walker Avenue will accommodate these vessels. This concept could easily expand to offer rental rowboats to the public, adding to the much more active riverfront envisioned by the Core to Shore program.
LITTLE FLOWER PLAZA

Oklahoma City’s Latino community is a vital part of Oklahoma City, and Little Flower Church is, in many ways, the spiritual symbol of that community. Little Flower Plaza, adjacent to Walker Avenue, will reflect the nature of the traditional Latin-American town square, flanked by the church on the north and retail shops to the south and west. The retail edge will include the neighborhood library, welcoming all residents of the Core to Shore District.

“No residents will have to walk more than two blocks to get to a park.”

NEIGHBORHOOD GREENS

Neighborhood Greens, surrounded by streets and homes with park views, are staples of fine traditional neighborhoods. The Core to Shore concept also incorporates this fundamental pattern, creating neighborhood parks that are integral to Core to Shore’s park system and the character of its neighborhoods. Both the West Park and the Wheeler Park Neighborhoods have centrally located greens, including one square block surrounded by streets for maximum public access. These smaller greens contain comfortable seating, perhaps a playground and pavilion, trees and lawn, and places for neighbors to gather and hold small events such as community picnics. They are the “central parks” of their local areas, more intimate than the great public space nearby, but very important to the neighborhoods’ urban quality and social fabric.

The park locations also serve other purposes in the neighborhood fabric. For example, the Wheeler Park neighborhood green discourages east/west through traffic in this predominantly single family neighborhood.

WHEELER PARK AND RIVERSIDE DRIVE

A “Riverside Drive” will run along the river’s edge, connecting 15th Street to Western Avenue. This drive, the only street in Oklahoma City that parallels the riverfront for any distance, will improve access to both the river and the planned neighborhood to the north without dominating the public greenway.
The existing Wheeler Park occupies a substantial portion of the southwest part of the District. The new Wheeler Park neighborhood will retain some, but not all, of this underutilized park. The City should sell the portion of the park that is to be developed and use the revenue for other project costs as outlined in the Implementation section of this Plan. Currently, Wheeler Park has several outdated baseball diamonds, substandard in comparison to other facilities in the City. The City Parks Department is working with private developers to build high quality ballpark facilities that contain multiple diamonds and supportive athletic facilities to serve the community.

The existing detention pond in Wheeler Park at 15th and Lee will be improved and incorporated into a small open space. The river edge of Wheeler Park will provide a setting for mid-rise residential buildings to the west, featuring excellent views of the river and downtown.

"Art is much less important than life, but what a poor life without it."
- Robert Motherwell

PUBLIC ART

Public art should pervade the Core to Shore park and public space system. Oklahoma City has a strong tradition of investment in the arts. For example, the Oklahoma City Museum of Art has one of the most varied and largest collections of Dale Chihuly’s glass. The Oklahoma “Land Run” Monument by Paul More and Alan Houser’s sculpture “As Long as the Waters Flow” are two examples of public art that have captured local history and created landmarks in Oklahoma City.

Public art is integral to the Core to Shore District Plan; indeed, the District could become a unique outdoor gallery for public and environmental art. Beyond contributing to the District’s image, public art serves cultural, social, and economic purposes by:

- Stimulating public discussion and debate
- Creating an identity and landmark
- Educating people about local culture
- Generating cultural tourism
- Creating place recognition and distinction for development
Public art should both include individual pieces and be incorporated into the more functional features of the green network, such as lighting, park furniture, and surfaces. For example, lighting along the Boulevard and the pedestrian spine in Central Park may use special light columns inspired by Dale Chihuly’s glass art. These and other installations require further guidance through a Core to Shore Public Art Master Plan. The City, working with the Arts Council of Oklahoma City and other arts organizations, should initiate this effort.

Oklahoma City should explore a policy to designate a revenue source for public art. Many models for arts funding exist. One avenue for public art funding is a “One Percent for Art” program similar to the State of Oklahoma requirements for its public projects. For another example, Denver requires public art installations equivalent to at least one percent of the project cost of any private development receiving tax increment financing funds. As a result, Denver boasts a rich and varied public art collection that includes sculpture, streetscape art, mosaics, and paintings.

**LONG-RANGE DEVELOPMENT**

The Bridgewater Neighborhood, slated for future development, is organized around a lagoon that provides a central amenity for this special use district. This feature could serve as a staging or viewing area for rowing events or other water-related activity. However, the decision to proceed with this lagoon will depend on the nature of proposed development, and other ideas may emerge to connect this area to the Oklahoma River.

The Producers Oil Cooperative (Cotton Seed Plant) Special Use District, also a self-contained development site for the more distant future, could extend the Bricktown Canal. The Canal, which has become one of Oklahoma City’s most talked-about features, would link this site to Bricktown, encouraging people to walk or ride water taxis to its restaurants and ballpark, Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World, and Harkins Theaters. Small parks along the extended Canal could provide special places to encourage future development. The Bricktown connection is conceptual and could change substantially as a specific development program emerges.
ROADWAY BUFFERS

Urban freeways require significant noise abatement and mitigation that also provide significant green space opportunities. ODOT has purchased a multi-block open space corridor along the south edge of I-40 to mitigate environmental effects from the new road. To reduce the visual impact of the road and help it fit more seamlessly into the landscape of new neighborhoods, these open spaces should gently slope up to the retaining wall level along I-40. This has the visual effect of depressing the highway, hiding the tops of trucks and other large vehicles from casual view. Tree plantings will soften the wall and provide an attractive landscape along the highway and attractive railings and barriers should provide security at the highway edge.

Major buildings, including Union Station, the planned events center and the recreation center in the West Park Neighborhood, define the north edge of the I-40 corridor. A sound wall is also likely to be necessary here to mitigate environmental impact. The buildings themselves may block the noise and visual intrusion of the highway. If not, the project should use land forms and plantings similar to those on the south side or may require a sound wall.

Shields Boulevard is built on a berm as it ascends from the Boulevard to the bridge over the river. The area directly west of this road, on the berm, should be planted with trees and native grasses to minimize visual impact on the neighborhoods below and add interest to the road.

ACTIONS

- Purchase or otherwise obtain the land required to build the parks and open space areas described in the plan. For Central Park, this includes the land between Walker and Robinson Avenues, south of the Boulevard to the new I-40 alignment. The blocks between Harvey and Walker Avenues should be reserved for future civic amenities. If building new civic amenities proves impractical, the blocks should be developed as housing.
- Engage notable park designers to design the public spaces of the Core to Shore District. Design and construct the parks to the highest standards to ensure long-term quality, flexibility, and improve land values of adjacent parcels in key locations.
- Initiate a Public Art Master Plan for the Core to Shore District and identify a funding source, such as the one percent for art program.
- Secure funds for the refinements and enhancements of the Myriad Botanical Gardens and Crystal Bridge improvements to make them a front door at the north end of the Pedestrian spine.
• Finalize the details of the placement and design of the I-40 pedestrian bridge, noise walls, berms, and open space areas associated with I-40 with ODOT and initiate a design scheme for a landmark pedestrian bridge and the landscape buffer zones.

• Encourage rowing and boating activities, and their associated development, on the Oklahoma River

• Begin a coordinated plan with the Army Corps of Engineers to make the Oklahoma River banks more accessible and inviting to the public

• Design and implement the “beacon” concept at the north shore of the pedestrian spine and initiate its implementation.

• Develop a design and implementation plan for the pedestrian bridge over the river from the pedestrian spine to Wiley Post Park.

• Design and build an amphitheater with a capacity of about 300 to 500 in Wiley Post Park on the south bank of the Oklahoma River to accommodate small performances. Orient seating areas with views back to the river and Downtown

• Continue to refine the visions for the two Special Use Districts, the Oil Producers Cooperative site and Bridgewater, the current home of the Pull-A-Part facility

CIVIC AMENITIES

OBJECTIVES

• Develop civic resources in the Core to Shore District that support Downtown, distinguish and activate the District, accommodate cultural and community activities, and make public uses from the core to the river integral to the city design.

• Provide locations consistent with the District’s urban design patterns and principles for large civic buildings and uses that require large tracts of land, such as a convention center and transit center.

• Enrich the Downtown area and Core to Shore District with quality public facilities, such as a library, events center, and school that promote a sense of community.
**VISION**

The Core to Shore District’s adjacency to Downtown and location on the pedestrian spine from the city center and the river make it a superb location for major public buildings. The Core to Shore Plan includes the following facilities, designed to meet both citywide and local needs:

- Future convention center
- Multi-modal transit center
- Sites for future museums or cultural institutions
- Renovated Union Station
- Community events center
- Neighborhood library
- Elementary school
- Recreation center

The convention center and transit center locations were especially important Plan determinants because of their size and special site requirements. Because convention centers are large enclosures of space surrounded by windowless walls, they can deaden their surroundings if not carefully woven into the urban design fabric. They also need both a high exposure public entrance and a semi-industrial access for loading.

The transit center, as a multi-modal facility that will serve future commuter rail, bus, and fixed guideway transit, must be located along the north-south BNSF corridor, the most likely initial route for regional rail transportation.

Central Park creates an ideal foreground for major civic resources, starting with historic Union Station. A restored and reinvigorated Station would be flanked on the east by a community events center, providing places for activities and programs that take advantage of the park setting but are not dependent on weather. These two facilities also define the south side of the park and reinforce the character of 7th Street. In addition, these facilities, which form a corner with the convention center, can also provide special venues that complement the center. The west side of Central Park should also have the flexibility to include museums and cultural institutions, much as New York’s Central Park both accommodates and envelops the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The Core to Shore District will be a place for large-scale, one-of-a-kind City civic buildings, but will also be a lively collection of neighborhoods with up to 7,500 people. A small public library and elementary school are neighborhood-level essentials that serve the everyday needs of the Core to Shore community. The school should be an innovative community learning center, offering after-school programs and continuing education and enrichment classes, adding to the quality of living in Core to Shore.

**CONVENTION CENTER**

Oklahoma City, with a metropolitan population approaching 1.2 million, is an increasingly attractive convention and conference destination. However, the Cox Convention Center, with 186,000 square feet of assignable space (100,000 square feet of exhibition space, a 32,000 square foot arena, and 54,000 square feet of banquet and breakout space), is relatively small in the
marketplace and cannot be expanded adequately to compete with Oklahoma City’s peer cities. The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber has determined that a new facility of between 400,000 to one million square feet, combined with a 500-room convention hotel, is needed within the next decade to compete successfully for conventions.

The Core to Shore planning process evaluated sites within the vicinity of hotels serving the Cox Convention Center for such criteria as:

- Freeway and future public transportation access.
- Access to entertainment and restaurants.
- Hotel access
- Proximity to community features and attractions, such as Bricktown, the Ballpark, Ford Arena, and others.
- Public exposure and walkability, including a presence along the future Boulevard and Central Park.
• Participant amenities, such as existing or future retailing.
• Circulation and loading.
• Ease of site assembly and development.
• Area for expansion.

The location that best satisfies these criteria is the parcel between Robinson, Shields, the Boulevard and the new Interstate 40. First stage development would include the area between the Boulevard and 7th Street, with expansion space on the south to I-40. The site accommodates an 800,000 to one million square foot center, with about 300,000 square feet of exhibition space. Parking is located under the convention center, with service access provided from 7th Street and Shields. A convention hotel will anchor the new convention center at the intersection of Robinson and the Boulevard, and has capacity for additional meeting space.

A unique aspect of the new convention center concept is that the Robinson Avenue façade is punctuated by two residential blocks facing Central Park. These residential blocks feature retail at street level, private underground parking, and a service corridor separating them from the convention center. Between these buildings, a glass-enclosed convention center concourse would provide views to the park. The composition will combine a park-oriented public entrance for the convention center with retail and residential uses that animate the street.

As this plan is being written, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber is completing a feasibility analysis for a new convention center. The Chamber considers the Central Park East location as the primary center site, although the final report may make a different recommendation. The convention center should incorporate environmental energy design features throughout.
TRANSIT CENTER

A multimodal transit center for Oklahoma City should be able to accommodate local and intercity bus transportation, commuter rail, Amtrak, fixed guideway or circulator transit, and parking. A transit center site that meets the needs of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area for the next 50 to 100 years requires at least two square blocks with easy access from the interstate highway system and adjacency to potential passenger rail lines. The best potential location is along the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) north-south line between 4th Street and Sheridan Avenue on either side of the boulevard escalators, elevators, and stairs could be used to bring travelers up to the railroad tracks. This site could feasibly serve the east-west Union Pacific route between Midwest City and El Reno with some additional trackwork, as well as the primary BNSF line from Edmond to Norman. A transit center schematic would provide elevated rail platforms, surface level parking, and local transit for both buses and future streetcar or light rail service. This location serves Downtown, Bricktown, the proposed convention center site, and the Core to Shore District.

CULTURAL FACILITIES

During the next decade, Oklahoma City may build one or more new museums or other cultural institutions. Great city parks often include these special places and Oklahoma City’s Central Park should maintain this tradition. The south side of the Boulevard between Hudson and Walker Avenues is an ideal civic location, combining excellent transportation access and visibility with frontages along two signature public spaces. The City should acquire this parcel as part of the park acquisition,
reserving it for future civic use. To take full advantage of the Boulevard and Central Park frontages, a civic building would contain active retail space, such as a gift shop or restaurant, at street level.

As part of the park acquisition, the City should also acquire the three blocks south of this site, between Walker and Hudson from 4th and 7th Streets (see map to the left). These blocks may also accommodate museums or other civic projects seeking park-related sites at the time of implementation. If projects do not emerge, these blocks should develop instead as part of the West Park neighborhood, with mid- or high-rise residential development.

**UNION STATION**

Union Station, built in 1931 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a distinctive Spanish Mission-style structure obscured by surrounding uses. The completed Central Park will highlight Union Station as a place of preeminent civic importance. Restoration and adaptation of at least part of Union Station should be part of the Central Park development program. The station could also include features that complement park use, such as a bike station, coffee shop, and community room to support small events held in the park, such as weddings in the formal garden.

**EVENTS CENTER**

The Core to Shore Plan proposes a two-story events center west of Union Station to Robinson Avenue. The pedestrian spine and the pedestrian bridge over I-40 are framed by the Events Center and Union Station. The plan envisions a community recreation center on the first level, with space for private parties, public meetings, or civic events above, taking advantage of excellent views of Central Park and the downtown skyline. The building’s strategic location next to Robinson and at the north approach to the I-40 pedestrian bridge makes it an excellent location for community events. Its activities would add life to the southeast corner of the Park and buffer it from the new highway. The events center should demonstrate LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) certification, including special sustainability features.

"In the last few decades, Oklahoma City has built new Museums, elegant hotels and restaurants, theaters, a ballpark and sports arenas and reawakened the sense of the Downtown as the central community place. The business of the workday, the excitement of a game leave a longing for more."
CRYSTAL BRIDGE RENOVATION

The south end of the Myriad Gardens’ Crystal Bridge is prominent in the Core to Shore Plan’s design fabric, and is the north terminus of the processional that connects downtown and the river. The existing mechanical building should be reconfigured to create an entry plaza for people arriving at the Myriad Gardens from the Boulevard retail development and other points south. A new pedestrian bridge running parallel to the east of Crystal Bridge gives pedestrians a direct route through Myriad Gardens from the Municipal Parking Structure to the Boulevard retail district.

“...The plan envisions a community recreation center on the first level, with space for private parties, public meetings, or civic events above, taking advantage of excellent views of Central Park and the downtown skyline...”

NEIGHBORHOOD FACILITIES

Neighborhood Recreation Center

The West Park Neighborhood Plan includes a neighborhood recreation center on a site north of I-40 and west of Walker Avenue. A widened sidewalk on the Walker Avenue bridge over I-40 also helps the center serve the Wheeler Park and North Shore Neighborhoods to the south as well. The recreation center could be either public or private, and could have a specialty theme, such as tennis or swimming, to broaden its market. A sound wall may be required to buffer the recreation center from highway noise.

Library

The Plan calls for a neighborhood public library located near the center of the entire redevelopment area. The library would be incorporated into neighborhood retail storefronts around Little Flower Plaza south of the church. This location reinforces the sense of the plaza, helps strengthen local retailing, and primarily serves Wheeler Park and North Shore residents who are relatively distant from the Central Library downtown. This library would also be convenient for the residents of West Park Neighborhood.
Elementary School

The Core to Shore District’s projected population between 6,000 and 7,500 people will produce a demand for an elementary school. The plan proposes a school site on a square block at 14th and Walker Avenue. This new urban school should be a true community learning center, with after-school programs and night and weekend classes. The 14th and Walker location is easy to reach by car, while maintaining very good pedestrian and bicycle access.

**ACTIONS**

- Purchase or otherwise acquire the land for the civic amenities described in this section, including the blocks between Walker and Hudson Avenues, north of I-40 and south of the Boulevard.
- Work with the institutions and boards responsible for operation, such as the Oklahoma City School Board and the Arts Council, to develop facilities that fit into their overall programs and reinforce the urban fabric of the Core to Shore District.
- Coordinate timing, financing, design, and other implementation issues with the appropriate agencies.
- Renovate and redesign the area south of the Crystal Bridge in the Myriad Gardens into a pedestrian plaza that leads into the pedestrian spine. Explore the feasibility of adding a pedestrian bridge on the east side of the Crystal Bridge for direct pedestrian access to the north and south.

**THE NEIGHBORHOODS**

**OBJECTIVES**

- Create vigorous, mixed-use neighborhoods that include:
  - A diversity of housing styles and types
  - A range of price points
  - A dense, vital urban environment
  - Neighborhood-serving retail and restaurants throughout
  - Restaurants and public activities at the shore line
  - Architectural variety
  - A variety of parks throughout all neighborhoods to promote outdoor activities
- Celebrate views of the Downtown and the Oklahoma River by:
  - Placing buildings to take advantage of views
- Controlling building heights and bulk
- Preserving views from public parks, waterways, and open space
- Create easy access to the river and encourage water activities.
- Provide an environment especially well-suited to public transportation, walking, and bicycling by
  - Creating a transit circulator to connect the Core to Shore District with Downtown
  - Providing easy access to transit systems serving outlying areas and the region
  - Including housing types that promote use of transportation alternatives
  - Hiding parking or subordinating it to the quality of the urban street
  - Emphasizing clear and commodious pedestrian and bicycle routes around and through the District, including the primary pedestrian spine linking Core to Shore
- Use high quality building materials and construction techniques to create sustainable, environmentally green buildings that conserve energy and non-renewable resources
- Conform to sustainability policies as established by the City by
  - Exploring incorporation of the most advanced techniques for green building including wind and solar power, insulating building materials, and building orientation
  - Offering incentives for sustainable building practices

**VISION**

The Core to Shore District includes three neighborhoods capable of providing homes for over 3,000 households. This added population of between 6,000 and 7,500 people is the driving force behind Core to Shore. The new residents are the life of the District, and will be the first-line users of the shops, parks, and streets. They become the owners of the Core to Shore District, and provide the atmosphere that attracts other visitors and makes a great place for all of the City’s citizens.

Without people, Core to Shore fails; to attract people, Core to Shore must build neighborhoods that reward their residents with the best of city life. Each of these neighborhoods West Park, Wheeler Park, and North Shore – has a distinct personality and residential prototype. Despite their individual differences, designed to accommodate diverse preferences and add character to the urban environment, all three share key attributes described below.

The neighborhoods should be diverse and include varied housing price points. To accomplish this, a City housing policy may be necessary to create affordable units for moderate income families.

“For the city to live, people must live in the city. Dense urban neighborhoods are the city’s lifeblood. It is where people find community, a place to belong... where they meet friends, raise their families, and live out of their lives.”
Access to Parks and Open Space

Just as parks and green space are fundamental to the overall Core to Shore concept, they are also essential to the quality of the individual neighborhoods. Central Park, Promenade Park, and smaller neighborhood greens anchor the neighborhoods and provide a counterpoint to their relatively high coverage, high-density residential blocks. Each Neighborhood Plan uses open spaces to improve neighborhood quality of life and to frame views of both the City and the river.

High Quality Buildings

Enduring building materials help ensure high quality housing and protect owners’ investments. The housing concepts encourage a variety of architectural styles to create eclectic and distinctive neighborhoods. Well-located community features, such as a school, recreation center, and library, add both necessary services and urban amenities to Core to Shore District’s neighborhoods.

Sustainability

Oklahoma City is currently developing an environmental sustainability policy that will guide development in the Core to Shore District. Sustainable, “green” development is a basis for all of the District’s development. Building designs should reflect a commitment to conserving energy, minimizing use of non-renewable resources, and using materials wisely. In addition to green buildings, the Core to Shore concept promotes green transportation. Its mix of uses, and emphasis on walking, bicycling, and transit will further reduce unnecessary driving and energy use. All of these features will help the District appeal to an expanding market attracted by lower energy costs and committed to good stewardship of the environment.

Pedestrian-Friendly Streets

Pedestrians prefer to walk on tree-lined streets. Large street trees along the sidewalks distinguish Oklahoma City’s great residential neighborhoods near downtown by adding human scale, providing summer shade, and adding color and seasonal interest. True to this tradition, trees will line all of the streets in the District, unifying it with a consistent canopy. The housing prototype examples also provide small urban setbacks for trees, street gardens, front porches, stairs, and stoops. Most streets include on-street parking on both sides to support mixed-use development in neighborhoods, promote calmer streets, and help separate the pedestrian and vehicular domains. In addition, the Core to Shore Consulting Team has coordinated efforts with the Downtown Streetscape and Traffic Master Plans to ensure that the District’s streets are part of the design family of downtown streets.
Convenient but Hidden Parking

Every prospective downtown resident wants convenient parking, but also does not want cars to dominate their environment. Almost every residential building in Core to Shore will incorporate parking into their structures, hiding it from public view. Surface parking, when used, is screened or located away from pedestrian areas.

Public Transportation

Transit-oriented development supports quality public transportation service by both design and density. Transit encourages walking and social activity, and invites people working and living in the Downtown Core to enjoy the new District. The plan recommends a public transportation circulator loop (further explained in the “Moving About” section) between Downtown and the Core to Shore District; the Central Oklahoma Transit and Parking Authority (COPTA) is currently studying this proposal.

THE WEST PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

The West Park neighborhood forms the west edge of Central Park between the Boulevard and the relocated Interstate 40. In West Park’s innovative residential prototype quadrangle buildings define the blocks and create semi-private central greens.

In the prototype example, the split-level design places covered parking a half-level below grade, with street-oriented townhomes on the first level above parking. The “street-home” facades feature porches and urban gardens. Upper levels have several configurations, including conventional double-loaded corridor, entryway, and single-loaded options. The flexible quadrangle pattern also encourages variety in façade architecture. West Park structures generally range from three to six levels, with taller buildings along Central Park to take advantage of views and strengthen the edge of the large park.

West Park buildings can also accommodate retail and service uses on their lower levels. Variations on the prototype may occur at different locations in the neighborhood. For example, housing in the western part of the neighborhood, adjacent to industrial uses along Shartel Avenue, may accommodate artist studios or live-work units.

The typical West Park block in the prototype examples achieve about 94 units and a net density of about 35 units per acre. It is the densest of Core to Shore’s housing prototypes, but also among its most innovative and marketable concepts.
Convention Center Housing

On the east side of Central Park, two residential blocks line the convention center, articulating the otherwise monotonous front wall of the convention center "box" and providing homes with a panoramic view of the park and Downtown. Active first floor use of the housing blocks may include restaurants and convenience retail and services that serve residents, event participants, park users, and the downtown community. This unusual arrangement will place life and interest on the park, serve the market for premium parkside housing, and increase park security and appeal by providing "eyes on the park."

"West Park Neighborhood is dense urban place with a rich hierarchy of open spaces. This neighborhood will be a good choice for those who want to live close to the Downtown and at the same time enjoy the outdoors."

WHEELER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

The largely single-family Wheeler Park neighborhood is located west of Walker Avenue between the new Interstate 40 and the Oklahoma River. Small yards, front porches, and a grid of tree-canopied streets contribute to the neighborhood's character. Residential streets should be active, engaging, and pedestrian in scale, with houses designed to minimize the impact of garages on the streetscape. The neighborhood design may incorporate existing houses in good condition. The Wheeler Park area is a riverfront neighborhood, with an active accessible shore that provides water-related activities and connects to riverfront trail network.

Wheeler Park also includes four to six story condominiums or apartments along the riverfront, affording excellent river and city views. A new, residentially-scaled Riverside Drive improves neighborhood circulation and public access to the river, without allowing the automobile to dominate the shore. An elementary school/community center and library also support the neighborhood’s family-friendly atmosphere.
Public spaces and community features are also important to the fabric of Wheeler Park. Little Flower Church, one of the spiritual centers of Oklahoma City’s Latino community, will anchor a traditional town square surrounded on its other faces by retailing and the neighborhood public library. A neighborhood green in the center of this neighborhood provides a valuable open space and calms local traffic.
Garden office buildings on the north side of the neighborhood will accommodate small businesses and services. These buildings buffer Wheeler Park’s residential blocks from Interstate 40 and may themselves require sound walls for noise abatement.

**NORTH SHORE NEIGHBORHOOD**

The North Shore neighborhoods extend from Interstate 40 south to the Oklahoma River between Shields and Walker Avenues. North Shore consists of four housing prototypes: North Shore Mews, multifamily units in Parkview, mixed-use condominiums in Riverlake, and high-rise Parkview residences in River Towers along the shore. The variety of housing types in North Shore promotes diversity, density, and variety throughout the neighborhood. The neighborhood offers several products and price points, appealing to different groups of potential residents. The development along the river’s edge, the new Riverlake, and abundant parks establish a distinctive neighborhood image, positioned between the very urban quality of Central Park and its neighborhood and the lower-density Wheeler Park neighborhood.

**North Shore Mews**

North Shore Mews offers an attractive, high-density attached townhome environment, well-suited to a variety of markets, including families. This part of the neighborhood is located south of the Interstate 40 corridor between Promenade Park and Walker Avenue. Its eastern edge is strongly oriented to the park and the pedestrian spine, while its western edge has a strong relationship to Little Flower Plaza and the Wheeler Park neighborhood. The prototype block example includes four rows of townhomes. Outer rows are oriented
to the bordering streets, while the inner rows face an internal pedestrian street. Each block includes an internal common, a green space of about one-third acre, large enough for a small swimming or exercise facility for instance, for use of residents of the mews block.

The townhouses themselves, in this example, are two to three-story units with garage access opening off internal streets or "mews." Detailed unit design may include roof gardens, and street elevations include porches and small gardens. The plan has the flexibility to incorporate retail or mixed use development at street corners, and also can adjust to accommodate existing significant buildings, such as the Latino Community Development Agency center. A block in the North Shore Mews prototype example includes up to 48 units, at a new density of about 18 units per acre.

Parkview

Parkview provides a low-rise walk-up apartment setting that combines mixed uses and substantial resident amenities. This North Shore precinct is located between Robinson Avenue and Shields Boulevard between the new Interstate 40 alignment and the riverfront park.

In the prototype example, live/work units with workshop space below and residences above, or mixed-use buildings with two or three levels of housing over retail are oriented to Promenade Park along Robinson Avenue. Three-story multi-family buildings, with units organized around

North Shore Mews, Prototype example
entryways, line east-west streets between Robinson and Shields, creating an urban, street-oriented apartment district. Residential buildings enclose a service court and common, providing surface parking and garages integrated into the rear of buildings at street level. Additional parking parallels Shields Boulevard, bounded by a landscaped buffer that screens the development from Shields. The service court also provides space for amenities such as a pool and cabana for each cluster.

Parkview apartments are typically single-level “flats.” In the example, lower level units may have individual entrances from the street, while entryways serve upper levels to avoid central corridors. In addition, neighborhood commercial and workshop space at street level along Robinson Avenue activates the edge of Promenade Park and provides a variety of services and places of interest to residents and park users. Parkview’s typical structures are three-story walk-ups, although elevators and additional parking can make additional levels possible. With three-story buildings, a prototype Parkview block provides 72 units, with a net density of about 20 units per acre.

Riverlake

The four buildings of Riverlake, a mixed-use development surrounding a small lake just off Promenade Park, combine a lakeside urban atmosphere with several housing types. This precinct, located just north of 15th Street between Promenade Park and Walker Avenue, includes lakefront retailing and services, street-oriented townhomes on its 13th and Walker Avenue faces, and four-story residential blocks above a two-level internal parking structure. The development’s signature feature is its lake. The lake can host small-scale participatory activities such as model boating and should include fountains for both image and practical aeration purposes. A boardwalk surrounds the lake, bordered by small-scale neighborhood retailing, restaurants, and services. The lake and boardwalk directly engage the pedestrian spine and Promenade Park, and become extensions of the Core to Shore District’s open space system.
Riverlake includes a combination of two or three story street-oriented townhomes, wrapping the internal parking garage, and apartment flats above the parking, creating a step-back cross section. A typical prototype building yields up to 60 units and 15,000 square feet of retailing, with a gross density of 20 units per acre (including the lake area).

**River Towers**

River Towers terminates Promenade Park and provides a gateway that leads to the Core to Shore District’s final major public space – the expanse of the Oklahoma River, the pedestrian bridge to Wiley Post Park, and its shoreline chain of parks and trails. The project’s two point towers may be up to twenty stories in height and are located on the north shore of the Oklahoma River. Their location, at the intersection of the north-south Core to Shore spine and the east-west river greenway provides residents with superb views in every direction. The towers rise from a plinth that accommodates residential parking; restaurants and other retailing wrap the parking base along the central pedestrian spine. These key commercial spaces will enliven the pedestrian level and draw people to the river’s edge.

River Towers apartments are single-level units, each of which boasts a deck and varying views. In the prototype example, the point towers have relatively small floor plates, and have flexible configurations, ranging from two to six units per level. Each building yields up to 100 units, with a gross density (including central space and access) of 22 units per acre.
• Initiate the implementation of the parks:
  - Acquire or otherwise obtain property to build the parks proposed by the Parks section of this document
  - Determine the park design process and commence design through to construction documents
  - Secure funding for construction of the parks and open space
• Encourage the private sector development community to assemble land for redevelopment, which may include City incentives or infrastructure investment and private sector contribution of land for parks, open space, or other civic uses
• Create a detailed sub-area plan for each neighborhood to guide development when developers are ready to move forward with project design and implementation
• Explore and possibly implement policies that ensure accessible housing for a diverse population including moderate income and worker housing.
• Implement the streetscape projects along streets that are nearing redevelopment and coordinate their timing so that it is logically sequenced with ODOT construction, bridge closings, and private development
• Determine and implement the zoning mechanism, design guidelines, and possible design review processes that ensure and encourage the development types envisioned in this plan
• Prepare sustainable “green” building guidelines and standards for the Core to Shore District
• Work with COTPA (Central Oklahoma Transit and Parking Authority) to ensure a transit circulator between Downtown and the Core to Shore District
• Coordinate with the Army Corps of Engineers on buildings and structures along the Oklahoma River
• Continue to coordinate with public entities such as the Oklahoma City Public Schools District, the Parks and Recreation Department, Cultural Arts Commission, and the Metropolitan Library System to determine feasibility, timing, costs, responsibilities, and other issues associated with implementing the civic amenities identified in this plan.
• Continue to coordinate with private sector entities such as the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, The Commercial Real Estate Council, and Downtown Oklahoma City, Inc. to promote the Core to Shore Plan and look for partnership opportunities.

MOVING ABOUT

OBJECTIVES
• Create a street network that places a priority on pedestrian and bicycle transportation.
• Provide functional accommodation of motor vehicles, but does not allow traffic to dominate the urban environment.
• Promote bicycle, transit, and pedestrian travel by providing attractive, comfortable, and safe sidewalks, pathways, and other infrastructure throughout the District.
• Establish a transit circulator that connects the Core to Shore District with Downtown and, through a multi-modal transit center, other destinations in and around Oklahoma City.
• Provide conveniences and support features for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.
• Establish traffic speeds and operations that are compatible with transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes. Implement street designs that perform at these desired speeds.
• Tolerate moderate traffic congestion at peak hours, if necessary, to preserve urban quality and a quality environment for transit and self-propelled transportation.

VISION

The Core to Shore initiative began with a major transportation project – the planned relocation of Interstate 40 to a new alignment and replacement of the old elevated freeway with a grand urban boulevard – and mobility remains a major part of the design framework. The District should function well for all modes of transportation – motor vehicles, public transportation, pedestrians, and cyclists. Yet, the transportation system should enhance, rather than compromise,
the quality of this urban environment. Automobile transportation has long enjoyed priority over other means of urban movement, often to the detriment of the quality and scale of the city. However, the cities that most people consider memorable, like San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, and Amsterdam, are walking environments. Great places are experienced out of the car, and usually manage, rather than are dominated by, the automobile. The new Core to Shore District, built on a sequence of public spaces, will promote walking, bicycling, and public transportation. Its streets will accommodate motor vehicles well, but will not give them first priority and will not measure success by traffic speeds.

THE STREET NETWORK

The Core to Shore District’s street network will largely respect the existing street grid. Robinson and Walker Avenues remain the District’s primary north-south arterials, while other north-south streets circulate local traffic within their individual neighborhoods. Shields Boulevard, parallel to the BNSF, provides uninterrupted through movement as well as truck access to the new convention center and service to Bridgewater and Producers Cooperative, should long-term development occur on these sites east of the railroad.

The east-west street network is largely a local service system. The Boulevard and 7th Street provide east-west continuity through the District north of the new I-40 alignment. In the North Shores neighborhood, 15th Street and the new Riverside Drive connect residential areas and serve the Oklahoma Riverfront. Wheeler Park, a new, largely single-family neighborhood, will include a new street grid for both internal and external circulation. This local street web also connects to a new Riverside Drive and the north shore of the river. Other east-west segments are internal to the neighborhoods, designed to accommodate local traffic without encouraging through movements.

"Great places are experienced out of the car."

Street design and character is very important to Core to Shore’s urban environment, where transportation design and urban design reinforce one another. Nearly all of the District’s streets will be tree-lined; have continuous, generous sidewalks; and include on-street parking. The pattern of sidewalks set back behind a tree lawn, and a canopy of street trees continues the pattern
of gracious, pedestrian-oriented local streets common to Oklahoma City's established neighborhoods. On-street parking adds convenience and calms traffic in the District's street-oriented urban environment. The pattern of buffering vehicular and pedestrian traffic with on-street parking and tree lawns, makes the pedestrian experience far safer and more pleasant.

The Core to Shore Transportation Master Plan presents recommended cross-sections for new and improved streets in the District. Street construction will occur incrementally as the neighborhoods develop. The City will implement streetscape improvements on major District streets as funds become available and development warrants. Design and construction should be coordinated with other projects, including Interstate 40, the Boulevard, and project development, to minimize disruptions and traffic delays.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

The Core to Shore District will be an excellent environment for non-motorized transportation. Walking and bicycling will be the preferred means of movement through and within the neighborhoods, and the network of streets, pathways, sidewalks, and trails will work together to promote these means of circulation. Core to Shore will be a “green” transportation environment in two senses of the word – green by providing streets lined with trees and gardens; and green by promoting self-propelled transportation, healthy, energy efficient, and inherently non-polluting.

"The pedestrian spine... will be the primary pedestrian pathway from downtown to the south of the Oklahoma River."

The Pedestrian Environment

Street design and development patterns, down to the configuration of individual buildings, promote pedestrian activity. The proposed land use layout and inter-related patterns of street-level retail and restaurant development, civic amenities, buildings, and parks make walking a best and most enjoyable way to experience the District and its features.
STREET SECTION PLAN

2-LANE COLLECTOR (WITH MEDIAN)

2-LANE COLLECTOR (NO MEDIAN)

LOCAL STREET

4-LANE ARTERIAL

THE BOULEVARD - STREET SECTION A

THE BOULEVARD - STREET SECTION B
To create a distinctive pedestrian environment, the Core to Shore Transportation Master Plan calls for sidewalks ranging from six to ten feet wide throughout the District, and 25-foot wide along the Boulevard, as described earlier. The Boulevard's traffic speed will be 25 miles per hour, and carefully designed crossings, including a major pedestrian crossing at its intersection with the Harvey Avenue pedestrian spine, will make the pedestrian spine permeable. The pedestrian spine, featuring major pedestrian bridges over I-40 and across the Oklahoma River to the Wiley Post Park, will be the primary pedestrian pathway from downtown to the south shore of the Oklahoma River. A less formal web of pathways through the District's parks and public spaces complements the pedestrian spine. To reinforce the spine's direct connection to the center of Downtown, the City should consider a pedestrian bridge on the east side of the Crystal Bridge in Myriad Gardens.

The Cycling Environment

The Core to Shore District's flat topography, compact character, connected street system, and linkage to the riverfront trail makes it an ideal bicycling environment. The Harvey Avenue pedestrian spine along the Harvey Avenue alignment from Myriad Gardens to the river will be the major bicycle route leading from Downtown to the riverfront trail network. The detailed design of the spine and its related facilities may include separate tracks for bicycles and pedestrians, to minimize conflicts. Generally, bicycling speeds along the spine should be restricted to ensure a safe environment for all users.

Shared use streets will also be an important part of the District's bicycling infrastructure. Robinson and Walker Avenues should include share-the-road advisory signage and "sharrows," a new pavement marking that indicates shared use lanes between motorized and bicycle traffic, in their outside lanes. A secondary north-south on-street route would follow Hudson Avenue on the west side of Central Park to 7th Street; 7th Street to the Harvey Avenue spine; the spine across Interstate 40 on the new bridge; and Harvey Avenue south to the river. This route should also be signed and marked by "sharrows." The rest of the neighborhood street network should promote shared use.

"The pedestrian spine along the Harvey Street alignment is also the main bicycle route from Downtown to the river."

The bicycle infrastructure should also include safe bicycle parking facilities along the sidewalks near retailing and restaurants, and at other important destinations. The inverted "U" bracket provides the most flexible and least intrusive bicycle-parking fixture generally available. Likewise, Central Park could include a bicycle station, parking, rental, and repair. Bicycle stations in parks such as Chicago's Millennium Park have proven very popular among cyclists and encourage bicycling by both residents and visitors.

"Convenient, frequent public transportation strongly reinforces pedestrian activity."
Public Transportation

Convenient, frequent public transportation strongly reinforces pedestrian activity. The Core to Shore District’s nearness to Downtown, medical campuses, and even the Capitol District, and its projected density, make it especially suitable for public transportation services.

At the time of this writing, the Central Oklahoma Transportation & Parking Authority (COTPA) is conducting an alternative analysis for transit within the Downtown and Core to Shore areas. As noted in the Neighborhoods Chapter, the Core to Shore Plan recommends that COPTA consider a bi-directional transit loop operating along Robinson and Walker Avenues from Downtown to the Oklahoma River. This loop would also serve the multi-modal transit center when that facility is developed. Characteristics of this circulator service could include:

- Well-designed and attractive vehicles that create a distinctive image for the transit system as well as the Downtown and Core to Shore District
- Low-floor vehicles for transit riders’ convenience and good access for people with disabilities
- Vehicles with multiple doors, substantial standing room, and transverse seating in place of rows, to facilitate quick loading and unloading
- Marked transit stops, typically two to three blocks apart
- Free fare to encourage ridership and expedite trips

In addition to the circulator, the District’s adjacency to the proposed transit center at the Boulevard and the BSNF rail line will be convenient for residents traveling to other parts of Oklahoma City, commuters, and intercity travelers. The Transit Center will serve proposed bus rapid transit lines to the west, local busses, potential commuter rail services on the BSNF and UP rail lines, and Amtrak passengers.

Further details on the streets, traffic, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle travel is contained in the Transportation Master Plan available from the City’s Public Works Department.
ACTIONS

- Implement a streetscape program to provide continuous sidewalks and tree canopy on both existing and new roads.
- Coordinate street furnishings, such as benches and lights, with the Boulevard streetscape, but at a neighborhood scale.
- Establish vehicular speeds compatible with pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Create a policy for installation of bicycle parking fixtures at strategic locations, including retail, restaurant, and civic destinations.
- Build the pedestrian spine along the Harvey alignment to connect pedestrians and bicyclists from Downtown to the river and the riverfront trail system.
- Implement the recommendations of the Core to Shore Transportation Master Plan including:
  - Improving streets to comply with recommended cross sections and intersections
  - Converting one-way streets to two-way operation where possible
  - Coordinating with COTPA to implement a transit circulator linking the Core to Shore District with Downtown
- Design and build the pedestrian bridges over I-40 and the river to the new amphitheater at Wiley Post Park. Scheduling will depend on ODOT’s I-40 construction and the redevelopment activities of the Core to Shore District.
- Consider a new pedestrian bridge on the east side of the Crystal Bridge in Myriad Gardens to provide a direct connection from the pedestrian spine to the center of Downtown.
- Safely and commodiously accommodate both pedestrian and bicyclists’ needs when implementing the pedestrian spine along Harvey
SEQUENCING STRATEGY

The first issue to consider is the sequencing of the many parts of the Core to Shore District. Sequencing must be coordinated with the completion dates for the key transportation projects that are driving the redevelopment process: the completion of the new mainline of Interstate 40, scheduled for 2012, and the opening of the Boulevard eighteen months thereafter. The initial Core to Shore focus projects must:

- Respond to demonstrated markets in Downtown Oklahoma City and fall within the probable demands identified by the market analysis.
- Develop a self-contained, high quality environment that will not be seriously affected by heavy construction on transportation facilities.
- Establish the precedent for accelerated private development after I-40 and the Boulevard are completed.

PHASE I - INITIAL PROJECTS (2008-2012)

The initial projects that respond to these requirements include:
Acquisition of the entire Central Park site between Robinson and Walker Avenues, south of the Boulevard to I-40, and completion of the south half of the Park, between 5th and 7th Streets

Completing the south half of the Park creates a valuable public environment that transforms the District’s image. It also creates the conditions necessary to leverage adjacent new residential development, and remains relatively immune to the impact of heavy construction on either the old or new I-40 alignments. The completed south half of Central Park will also become the forecourt for the historic Union Station and events center, adding a civic quality to 7th Street.

The City should also acquire and clear the north half of Central Park during the first phase of the project

However, actual development of the north half of Central Park and surrounding improvements must be coordinated with adjacent Boulevard construction after 2012. In the interim, the north side of the park should become a large, multi-purpose lawn, providing a useful public feature at minimum capital cost.

West Park blocks adjacent to Central Park

The completed south part of Central Park leverages residential development on the adjacent West Park blocks. This initial phase of West Park development includes the four square blocks between 5th, 7th, Hudson, and Dewey. In the design example for the West Park blocks, combining street-oriented, single-level townhouses and upper-level apartments in a quadrangle configuration with a private green courtyard, has features that appeal to a wide range of potential residents. It also achieves the highest density of the residential prototypes. The four-block first phase yields about 360 units that can easily be built in self-contained, single block increments.
An initial Wheeler Park Neighborhood phase between Walker and Lee Avenues

This initial phase establishes a District presence south of the new I-40 and provides townhomes oriented to a renewed Walker Avenue and single-family homes along the east-west local streets. The homes set the theme for neighborhood reconstruction south of new I-40 alignment. These new units could provide a relocation resource for some residents of the existing Riverside neighborhood. By incorporating Little Flower Church and the new Little Flower Plaza, this initial Wheeler Park phase also builds on key civic features. Because of blighted conditions, the balance of Wheeler Park Neighborhood should be acquired and reserved for future development during this initial phase. The sale of portions of Wheeler Park, currently owned by the City and slated for development in this Plan, can be used to fund other development objectives.

Site control of land between Robinson and Walker Avenues from the freeway corridor to the river

This area incorporates the Promenade Park site. Acquiring this seriously blighted area is necessary to support first stage development of the new Wheeler Park neighborhood immediately to the west. The building that currently houses the Latino Community Development Association (LCDA) building could remain, depending on redevelopment feasibility, to anchor this future redevelopment area, which becomes the site of North Shore Mews.

PHASE II - BOULEVARD CONSTRUCTION PHASE (2012-2016)

The projects that frame the frontage of the Boulevard and solidify the framework are a logical focus for this period. The Boulevard itself will be complete at the midpoint of this second increment in the sequence. Suggested projects during this phase include:
The north blocks of Central Park

Timing of this construction should be coordinated with the Boulevard project, so that these two critical private and public realm investments open at the same time. Underground parking for the development and the Park must also be coordinated.

The Boulevard Mixed-Use project

The pre-development period (developer selection, pre-lease, financing, and design) of this very complicated project should occur at the beginning of the Core to Shore implementation and is likely to be complete when Boulevard construction begins in 2012. The Boulevard Mixed-Use project and the Boulevard itself should open at about the same time.

Convention Center with hotel and housing

The pre-development period for the convention center should be complete around 2014, coinciding with opening of the Boulevard. Construction of this project should occur in the latter part of this increment. However, execution of the convention center could be accelerated dependant on the findings of the Greater Oklahoma Chamber’s feasibility study and the desire of the City to accelerate the timing.
Promenade Park

Promenade Park development should occur during this period, completing the essential framework of the Core to Shore park system, and encouraging initial stage construction of North Shore Mews.

River Towers

The River Towers at the shore establish the southern anchor of the Core to Shore framework, and capitalize on the riverfront greenway and completion of Promenade Park.

North Shore Mews blocks adjacent to Promenade Park

This project establishes the edge of the linear park and defines the green space link from Downtown to the river. The initial phase of this townhome project should be coordinated with Promenade Park development and the reconstruction of Harvey Avenue.

“\textit{The River Towers at the shore establish the southern anchor of the Core to Shore framework.}”

West Park blocks between the Boulevard and 5th Street

These blocks are likely to develop following the demolition of the I-40 structure and would complete private development along the Central Park frontage. Alternatively, civic projects could occupy the Boulevard to 5th Street blocks between Hudson and Walker. If civic uses do not emerge by the beginning of this period, these high-value sites should then be incorporated into the West Park neighborhood development.

Incremental single-family development in the Wheeler Park neighborhood

As the Core to Shore District’s only single-family housing opportunity, construction should continue on this site, consistent with market demand.

\textbf{PHASE III - PROJECT MATURATION (2016-2020)}

During this period, the neighborhood components already started will continue to grow incrementally, responding to continuing market demand. In addition, development should begin on:

- \textit{Riverlake} In addition to mid-rise housing, Riverlake includes a significant retail component that will require a nearby population base and completion of the Core to Shore processional open space from Downtown. Riverlake also includes a major water feature that connects to Promenade Park. These various features suggest a development most appropriately built at a mature phase in the project, when the market will support higher prices.
- \textit{Parkview} With the completion of Promenade Park and the establishment of the North Shore Mews, Parkview development, with its live/work retail space, also emerges.
PHASE III

A

Land Acquisition

B

Build Out
**PHASE IV - PROJECT BUILD-OUT (2020-2030)**

At this point, each project component will have started, and development will continue on an incremental basis until the Core to Shore District achieves full build-out. Based on probable development rates, build-out of the project should occur around 2030. Bridgewater and the Producers Oil Mill Sites will develop according to demand.
DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS

The Core to Shore program will produce a massive private market investment that will remake this strategic part of the city. However, the projects already funded through the I-40 relocation process – the new I-40 mainline, a basic boulevard section on the old I-40 alignment, a pedestrian bridge at Harvey Avenue, and a park to mitigate impact along the south side of the new alignment – will not, by themselves, evoke this private response. Additional public or community sector investments are necessary to create the conditions for the Core to Shore District. These investments can be placed into the following categories:

“Parks and open spaces are the backbone of the Core to Shore vision.”

Park Development

Parks and open spaces are the backbone of the Core to Shore vision. Central Park and Promenade Park are the project’s most visible public realm components, creating the procession that links Downtown and the riverfront and the catalyst for private development. Riverlake, a water feature connected to Promenade Park and a focus for the surrounding mixed use project, is also likely to be a public space. Finally, smaller public spaces, including West Park Green and Little Flower Plaza, punctuate Core to Shore’s residential neighborhoods.

Boulevard Enhancement.

While ODOT’s I-40 project will replace the existing I-40 structure with a surface boulevard, it will not construct the “Grand Boulevard” that creates the environment for both Central Park and Core to Shore’s largest single project, the Boulevard Mixed Use development. The enhancements necessary to create a distinctive public environment must be financed outside of the ODOT project.

Land Assembly

Site control is essential in the critical early years of the redevelopment project. Land purchases should be voluntary to the greatest degree possible, and eminent domain should be employed only as a last resort. This, plus the public character of the overall project, may produce acquisition and relocation costs that exceed the private market value of the land. The program must also fund site preparation costs such as building demolition and environmental remediation, typical in redevelopment areas.

Streets and Streetscape.

The Core to Shore Plan envisions a network of streets that, by design, satisfies the urban design principle of street-oriented development and creates an intimate community scale. In addition, many of the local streets through the redevelopment area need to be upgraded. Thus, the project proposes reconstructing these streets following the design and dimensions outlined in the Moving About section of this Plan. Street improvements should be coordinated with utility upgrades whenever possible to reduce costs. Where new streets need to be constructed, such as in the Wheeler Park Neighborhood, these guidelines should be followed as well.
Infrastructure

The Core to Shore Plan includes significant infrastructure investments, including at least some reconstruction of water and sewer lines, burial of electric utilities, relocation of the existing OG&E substation and communications center, and other infrastructure improvements necessary to support the new neighborhoods.

Other Transportation Improvements

The long-term Core to Shore program will involve both small and large-scale transportation investments, ranging from trails and pathways to the proposed multi-modal Transportation Center, the possibility of fixed guideway transit, and new streets and bridges providing access to Bridgewater and the Producers Cooperative Oil Mills if this site becomes available for future redevelopment.

Public Projects

These major investments include a new convention center and events center, Union Station restoration, and potential civic buildings on sites within or adjacent to Central Park.

Community Development

Community development programs should be incorporated into the overall Core to Shore District to promote income diversity and assure that an appropriate share of the neighborhood’s housing is affordable for moderate income households. These programs may include construction financing, land conveyances and project development packages for community development corporations, and mortgage assistance for low and moderate income-buyers.

FINANCING STRATEGY

This plan does not include a detailed financing scheme. Given the Core to Shore District’s long-term, incremental nature, funding may change as new projects and markets emerge. However, the following financing principles should guide the implementation process:

- **Public Improvements** Major visible public improvements and amenities, including the public open space system, Boulevard enhancement, street network and streetscape, and major public projects, such as the convention center and Union Station restoration, will be financed through public bond issues and tax increment financing (TIF). This includes the cost of land and site preparation for these projects. Signature projects envisioned by this plan may be incorporated into a MAPS III bond issue. Tax increment financing (TIF) may also be used to finance public improvements. The State of Oklahoma permits allocation of incremental tax revenues created by redevelopment projects for up to 25 years. This spans the probable build-out period of the Core to Shore District. In a phased project, however, TIF can be used more effectively if its execution is also phased. For example, rather than establishing one large TIF district whose tax allocation authority expires in 2033 (if implemented in 2008), each of the build-out phases identified above might be a separate TIF district, each of which has a 25-year life.
• **Site Acquisition Redevelopment Sites** Preparation for eventual private redevelopment will be funded through a combination of revenue bonds and TIF. Revenue bonds can support property acquisition and site preparation costs when these costs do not exceed the market value of the land. In a simplified example, a typical block in the West Park neighborhood prototype illustration supports 94 units. If these units achieved an average sales price of $250,000, the total value of condominium sales on this block is $23.5 million. Using the “20% rule” (supportable land cost equals 20% of sales cost), the redeveloped block can support a total land cost of $4.7 million, or about $39 per square foot. If land acquisition and site preparation costs fall below that cost, and a prospective developer is willing to pay for land at that level (adjusted for inflation), land sale proceeds will eventually be able to retire revenue bonds. On the other hand, assume that a developer’s proforma will not support land costs over $25 per square foot, TIF proceeds could then be used to fill the gap necessary to retire debt on the revenue bonds.

The site acquisition question also applies to sites with extraordinary relocation or development costs that, by virtue of their location or niche in the Core to Shore District, do not generate high densities. For example, a block in the North Shore Mews prototype yields about 48 townhome prototype units. If these units were priced at an average of $200,000 each, the total sales yield would be $9.6 million, and, again using the 20% rule, supportable land cost would be $1.92 million, or $16 per square foot. A combination of relocation payments to owner occupants, building demolition, and site preparation could take the actual cost of a buildable site over the $16 per square foot level. Again, TIF could be utilized to fill the gap between actual cost of a buildable site and that site’s feasible market value.

A review of Oklahoma redevelopment law suggests some question about the use of TIF for acquisition and preparation of sites that are conveyed to a private owner for non-industrial uses. This question should be clarified. However, it also appears that a public trust – an agency that has the capacity to issue revenue bonds and to hold and lease land to developers – could be an extremely useful tool. Under a public trust, the land itself does not lose its public character and may not be conveyed to a private owner. Oklahoma’s TIF law permits the allocation of taxes paid by the leasehold to be used to retire bonds.

- **Infrastructure** Project-specific infrastructure will generally be financed by TIF generated by each project. Utilities related to individual developments are poor candidates for conventional public bond financing – their benefits are project-specific and are generally invisible to the public. Necessary utility development should be a priority use for TIF, on much the same footing as site preparation.

- **Home Financing Programs** Community development related programs will be financed through Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnership funds. The Wheeler Park and North Shore Mews areas are the most likely places to incorporate some affordable home ownership initiatives. Residents benefitting from these programs should be fully integrated into neighborhoods, and identification of any geographic area within Core to Shore as “affordable housing” or “low-income housing” should be strictly avoided. Deferred second mortgages (or soft second mortgages) are a well-accepted method of decreasing monthly housing costs to qualifying low-and moderate-income home buyers.
In addition, the City, along with local lenders, should consider establishing a construction loan fund, focused largely on single-family construction in the Core to Shore District’s Wheeler Park neighborhood.

REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Boulevard, Central Park, and Promenade Park will leave the citizens of Oklahoma City with features of lasting value. However, the economic and community payoff is the surrounding development – the new neighborhoods that add 6,000 to 7,500 new residents and significant new retail and office development into the heart of the City. The city may use one of several strategic models for maximizing this redevelopment potential. This discussion explores those models, which include:

- Public Investment/Private Response
- Full Site Control
- Strategic Site Control

“Given the Core to Shore District’s long-term, incremental nature, funding may change as new projects and markets emerge”.

Public Investment/Private Response

This model suggests a relatively hands-off approach, where the public sector is limited to building the major catalyzing amenities – the Boulevard, Central Park, Promenade Park, and other features in the public realm – and the private sector responds without further active public intervention other than development and design guidelines. Land seeks its own value and is assembled gradually and entirely through the private sector. Because it has little active involvement in assembling deals, the City uses design guidelines and zoning regulations, based on the Core to Shore Plan, to assure that the outcomes are relatively consistent with the Plan’s vision. The advantages of this approach are:

- **Its clarity of approach and limited public sector engagement.** The role of the public sector is extremely clear and limited – build public improvements that attract the private sector, and let the market respond. This is essentially the process that American city-building has historically followed.
- **No requirement for public action or engagement in land assembly or relocation.** Eminent domain is not an issue in this approach, and property owners and potential developers reach their own agreements.
- **No need for a new development entity.**

However, the approach also has significant disadvantages. They include:

- **Lack of certainty over the timing or, in some cases, quality of redevelopment.** This may affect the performance of major public investments. For example, Central Park, fully improved but lacking the context provided by neighboring housing development, may feel insecure to users and fail to reach its potential as a community space.
- **Over-reliance on design standards and zoning review.** Relying solely on zoning requirements, rather than close working partnerships to deliver desirable project outcomes, can put
a great deal of pressure on regulations. This raises the likelihood of gradual erosion of development standards, and, as a result, a District that falls short of expectations.

- **Buyer uncertainty** In an area whose future is based on transformation, home buyers want certainty – they do not want to be pioneers taking high risks, and want to know that surrounding properties will be developed in ways that protect their investment. The private response model tends to maximize risk exposure for these buyers, and may discourage them from buying homes in the area.

- **Speculation and intermittent or uneven site development** Some sites that should be redeveloped to create a coherent community may be skipped over to the disadvantage of the overall project. These sites may be priced too high, or may have environmental or ownership issues that can cause developers to avoid them. The result could be an uneven, rather than logical, development pattern. If enough of the project succeeds, land economics could change developers’ willingness to pay these costs, but the risks remain.

### FULL SITE CONTROL

The opposite of the public investment/private response model is a full site control model. In this alternative, a redevelopment entity acquires and owns all of the redevelopment area within the Core to Shore District. This would exclude the long-term sites on the east side of Shields Boulevard. Site control does not necessarily mean site clearance. For example, businesses could continue to operate in place until their land is needed for a specific redevelopment phase, with conditions set out in a purchase agreement. Other innovative options could be considered as well, such as property owners receiving an equity share in a future redevelopment project commensurate with the value of their land. This could be very attractive to some owners who are less interested in an immediate buy-out and have an interest in a longer term annuity. The advantages of the full site control approach are:

- **Greatest certainty about future use of land** The Core to Shore Plan becomes the “constitution” of the redevelopment entity, and, within the imperatives of the market, this entity executes the Plan. It issues Requests for Proposals to private developers for various aspects of the Plan and evaluates competitive proposals based on, among other factors, consistency with the vision.

- **Smallest potential for speculation** The risk that owners of blighted or unproductive land will profit unreasonably from major public investments is minimized if land is acquired at the front end.

- **Predictability for pioneer residents** This approach minimizes the risk to early stage residents that neighboring sites will remain undeveloped or blighted, imperiling their own home investments.

The disadvantages of this approach are:

- **Highest front-end and holding costs** This model requires money to be raised and expended on sites that may not be developed for many years. Financing these large front-end expenditures requires extremely “patient” money that borders on philanthropy – not an attractive option for revenue bondholders. Alternatives include foundations, who could consider these patient investments as Program Related Income. In addition, front-end costs
could be minimized somewhat by individual purchase agreements with current owners, giving them the ability to remain in operation until their land is needed for development.

- **Most intensive public or community-sector involvement in land acquisition** This model requires a redevelopment entity or authority, which will then become the owner of the land and be charged with maintenance responsibilities. It could also conceivably produce a number of involuntary acquisitions to achieve full site control.

**STRATEGIC SITE CONTROL**

This approach is a hybrid of the first two models, and limits front-end site control to specific project areas, while letting the private market operate freely and in response to later phases. Strategic acquisitions might include sites needed in the early phases of the development; or sites whose conditions of blight must be removed in order to launch development of adjacent, early phase areas. In the Core to Shore Plan, “strategic sites” could include West Park between the planned Central Park and Dewey Avenue (early phase); at least the eastern half of the Wheeler Park neighborhood (early phase and conditions); and the North Shore Mews (early phase and conditions) and Parkview sites (conditions). These initial acquisitions should be designed to create a critical mass that provides security to both developers’ and home buyers’ investments in the Core to Shore District.

This model’s primary advantage over the full site control model is lower front-end financing requirements, while providing substantially more certainty of a desirable outcome than the public response/private investment model. Its primary disadvantages are its requirement for an organizational infrastructure without achieving full site control; and that it leaves later phases of the project to the operation of an unguided private market.

Each of these models has significant advantages and disadvantages, which the City should weigh as it moves forward. However, this Plan favors the hybrid strategic site control approach as offering enough guidance during the project’s early years to direct the private market toward full implementation later in the development process.

**ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

Either of the site control options requires a development entity with the ability to acquire, hold, and convey land; and, in partnership with developers and the City, assemble development deals. Potential options include:

**A CORE TO SHORE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

This may operate as an independent agency or as a subsidiary to an existing private sector group like The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. The development corporation could acquire land through private negotiation or receive land assembled by other agencies. The Development Corporation is largely designed as a real estate pass-through agency, assembling and selling property to a private developer or individual owners. The development corporation does not have the power of eminent domain, which, in any case, should be used only as a last resort, and only after negotiations for private acquisition have failed. In the development corporation option,
this power can be exercised only by the City of Oklahoma City with proper authorization. The use of tax increment financing for site acquisition and conveyance to private, non-manufacturing owners may also be in question under current law.

**A CORE TO SHORE PUBLIC TRUST.**

A public trust is a body authorized by state statutes that has the ability to acquire land and, unlike development corporations, may have the power of eminent domain. In addition, a public trust can issue bonds to finance its public purposes. The public trust differs from a development corporation in its ability to maintain ownership of land. Typically, the trust would provide a developer or subsequent entity (such as a condominium association) with a very long-term lease, while maintaining ownership of the underlying property. Because the land never actually loses its public character, TIF probably can be used for acquisition and site preparation. Oklahoma TIF law appears to permit the use of tax payments on the leasehold for repayment of TIF bonds. A downside may be a greater difficulty in securing financing for a project because the developer does not own the underlying land asset. In addition, the value of the underlying land is not taxable, and as a result, natural increases in value do not generate additional debt retirement capacity for TIF bonds.

Either of these options has possibilities, and both benefit from engaging the City, rather than the developer, as a primary partner of the Core to Shore District’s implementation. The special powers available to a public trust are especially intriguing and should receive serious consideration.

**ACTIONS**

- Develop a plan and begin purchasing or otherwise acquiring the land for public improvements and private redevelopment, possibly with private sector partners
- Explore the public redevelopment strategies to determine which one is best for the Core to Shore District’s implementation and initiate a program to manage redevelopment
- Identify and dedicate the financial and personnel resources necessary to manage the implementation as determined by the redevelopment program above, which could be a public/private venture
- Codify the Core to Shore District Framework Master Plan, adopting it as part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan

“If half of the tentative planned development is accomplished, you won’t recognize downtown Oklahoma City. Add a major park in the middle of downtown, a signature Boulevard, a new, state-of-the-art convention center, entertainment venues and a marina along the riverside, high-rise condominiums attached to a large retail center adjacent to the convention center, a nearby elementary school to attract young families to downtown living, and you have a living, breathing downtown that is active 24 hours a day, not just during the work day. Sounds a lot more appealing to me.”

-Terry Ott, Steering Committee, Member Core to Shore District Master Plan,